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SERMONS,

ON THE

MODE AND SUBJECTS

OF

Chriſtian Baptiſm,

OR

An attempt to ſhew that POURING *or* SPRINKLING *is a* SCRIPTURAL MODE; *and the* INFANTS *of* BELIEVERS *are* PROPER SUBJECTS *of the* BAPTISM *inſtituted by* CHRIST:

WITH AN

EXAMINATION of VARIOUS OBJECTIONS,

Particularly thoſe contained in a Courſe of Anonymous Letters to *Biſhop Hoadly*.

By JOSEPH LATHROP, D. D.
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SERMONS.

EPHESIANS, IV. 5.

ONE BAPTISM.

DISCOURSE—I.

TO perſuade the Epheſians to keep the unity of the ſpirit in the bond of peace, the Apoſtle urges this, among other arguments, that they had received *one Baptiſm*. If this *one Baptiſm* was deſigned to be a bond of peace and unity among chriſtians, how unhappy it is, that it ſhould become an occaſion of diviſion and ſeparation? Some will ſay, 'It is not *one* baptiſm, but *different* baptiſms that cauſe diviſions.' It is true, baptiſm is adminiſtered in different *modes*, and to different *ſubjects*; but ſtill, I hope, it will appear to be *one* baptiſm; and if ſo, then this difference is no juſt reaſon for diſunion.

YOU are ſenſible, my brethren, that I have not been wont to bring controverſies into the pulpit. I have purpoſely avoided the controverſy concerning *baptiſm* in years paſt, and ſhould have

have done ſo ſtill, had it not been lately revived among you.—It is not any prejudice againſt our brethren who differ from us, but a regard to your preſent circumſtances, and to the deſire of many among you, that now induces me to enter upon it: and I hope to handle it in ſuch a manner, as, at leaſt, not to offend, if I ſhould not convince. I ſhall not call in queſtion the validity of the baptiſm of our brethren: I only aim to vindicate *our own*. And ſurely when we are charged with having eſſentially changed a divine inſtitution—when we are repreſented as being in an unbaptized ſtate—when we are treated as unfit for chriſtian communion, we have a right to plead in our defence.

THERE is a late pamphlet which many of you have read, written by way of Letters to *Biſhop Hoadly*, the author of which labours to diſprove the validity both of *ſprinkling*, and of *infant baptiſm*, and treats them both with great contempt. I ſhall pay particular attention to this piece, and take notice of every thing that is material in it.

THE queſtions before us are two; whether *ſprinkling* is a ſcriptural mode: and whether *infants* are proper ſubjects of baptiſm? Theſe queſtions have no neceſſary connection with each other. But as the validity of our baptiſm is denied on account of the *mode* in which it was adminiſtered, as well as of the *age* at which we received it, I ſhall diſtinctly conſider both queſtions; and ſhall begin with the former.

PART

PART I.

WE will firſt enquire, What is the true ſcriptural mode of Baptiſm?

THERE are two ways, in which this ordinance is adminiſtered; one is *immerſion*, or plunging the whole body into water: The other is *affuſion*, which is pouring or ſprinkling water upon the ſubject. We do not deny the *validity* of immerſion; we only deny the *neceſſity* of it: But our brethren (at leaſt many of them) deny the validity of *affuſion*, and repreſent it as no baptiſm, to whomſoever adminiſtered. It is therefore of ſome importance that we enquire, whether there be not ſuch evidence, that *affuſion* is a ſcriptural mode, as may juſtify our uſe of it, and ſatisfy thoſe who have received baptiſm in this manner.

I SHALL firſt examine the import of the *Greek* word uſed for baptiſm—then conſider the uſes of baptiſm and the alluſions of ſcripture to theſe uſes—next enquire, what was the apoſtolic practice—and laſtly take ſome notice of the uſage of the church after the apoſtolic age.

I. WE will examine the import of the word *baptizo*, which is the *uſual*, if not the *only* word by which the writers of the New Teſtament expreſs the chriſtian ordinance of baptiſm.

IT is agreed, that the word *baptizo*, ſignifies *to waſh* by the application of water: But then, *how* the water is to be applied, whether by plunging the ſubject *into* water, or by pouring or ſprinkling water *upon* the ſubject, is the queſtion. This will beſt be determined by conſidering, how the word is uſed upon common occaſions.

THE author of the Letters to Biſhop *Hoadly* tells us, 'That the writers of the New Teſtament borrowed their phraſes from the Greek tranſlation of the Old Teſtament, called the *Septuagint*.' He refers us to this for the ſenſe of the words, which they have uſed for baptiſm. He allows that '*baptizo* is the offspring of *bapto*;' and conſequently may be taken in the ſame ſenſe. Zealous as he is for immerſion, he is conſtrained to acknowledge, that '*bapto* is never uſed in the *Septuagint* for the rite of waſhing a perſon's *whole* body:' But on the contrary, is ſometimes uſed for wetting the body by ſprinkling; as in Dan. 4. 33. and chap. 5. 21. where *Nebuchadnezzar's* body is ſaid to be *wet with the dew of heaven*. Now he ſays, 'We all know, that a perſon is wet with dew, not by immerſion into it, but by its diſtillation in gentle drops; we are ſprinkled with it.' And if *bapto* is never uſed for plunging the whole body, but ſometimes for ſprinkling it, probably *baptizo*, 'its offspring,' is generally uſed in the ſame ſenſe. Accordingly this author concedes that 'the word *baptizo*, is never *but once* uſed, in thoſe very numerous places of the Old Teſtament, where *bathing* the perſon is commanded.' The one inſtance he mentions is in 2 King. 5. 14. where *Naaman* is ſaid to have *dipped* (or baptiſed) *himſelf ſeven times in Jordan*, for the cure of his leproſy. But this *one* inſtance, at beſt, is but a doubtful one; for the law preſcribed that the leper ſhould be *ſprinkled* ſeven times for his cleanſing. The Prophet ſays, *waſh ſeven times and thou ſhalt be clean*. If the Prophet had any reſpect to the law, as it ſeems he had, by his enjoining him to waſh *ſeven times*, then

by

by *waſhing* he meant *ſprinkling*; ſo that this example will by no means prove, that the word *baptizo*, ſignifies to *plunge*. We have then *no* inſtance of *bapto*, and but one (and that a very doubtful inſtance) of *baptizo*, uſed in *all* the Old Teſtament for immerſion or bathing the body: But ſome inſtances of the former's being uſed for ſprinkling. Thus the matter ſtands according to the conceſſions of this writer.

Let us now conſult the New-Teſtament.—There we ſhall find clear and direct evidence, that the word *baptizo*, ſignifies to *pour* or *ſprinkle*.

It is ſaid, in the beginning of the 7th Chap. of Mark, That *the Phariſees, when they ſaw ſome of the diſciples eat bread with defiled (that is to ſay, with unwaſhen) hands, found fault; for the Phariſees and all the Jews, except they* waſh their hands *oft, eat not. And when they come from the market, except they* waſh, (*ean me baptizontai*, except they are *baptiſed*) *they eat not.* What in the former clauſe, is called *waſhing the hands*, is here called *being baptiſed.* The uſual manner of waſhing hands among the *Jews*, we learn from 2 Kings 3. 11. where it is ſaid, *Eliſha poured water on the hands of Elijah.* Here then you ſee, perſons are ſaid to be *baptiſed*, when only *a part* of the body is waſhed by the *pouring on* of water. It is added, *Many other things there are, which they have received to hold, as the waſhings* (*baptiſmous*, baptiſms) *of brazen veſſels and tables*, or beds, i. e. the *ſeats* on which they uſed to recline at meals, which were ſo large, that they could be waſhed only by pouring water on them.

It is ſaid, Luke 11. 37. *A certain Phariſee*

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aſked Jeſus to dine with him. And he went in and ſat down to meat. And when the Phariſee ſaw it, he marvelled, that he had not firſt waſhed before dinner: Not waſhed his *whole body*, but *only* his *hands*, according to the *Jewiſh* cuſtom mentioned in the before cited paſſage in *Mark*. And this is expreſſed by the ſame word, which is uſed for *baptiſing*. *He marvelled that he had not been* baptiſed, *ebaptiſthe, before dinner.*

THE *Jews*, by divine appointment, obſerved divers kinds of purifications, the greater part of which were *ſprinklings*. And theſe are expreſsly called *baptiſms*. The Apoſtle, in the 9th chap. to Heb. 10th verſe, ſpeaking of the *Jewiſh* ritual, ſays, *It ſtood only in meats and drinks and divers waſhings, (diaphorois baptiſmois,* divers *baptiſms.*) By theſe divers *baptiſms*, he plainly means the various ceremonies of *ſprinkling*; for ſo he explains them in the following verſes. *The blood of bulls and of goats, and the aſhes of an heifer* ſprinkling *the unclean, ſanctifieth to the purifying of the fleſh. Moſes took the blood of calves and goats with water—and* ſprinkled *the book and all the people. He* ſprinkled *likewiſe with blood both the tabernacle and all the veſſels of the miniſtry. And almoſt all things are, by the law, purged with blood*, i. e. with the *ſprinkling* of blood. Now as the Apoſtle ſpeaks of divers *baptiſms*, and then immediately illuſtrates them by divers *ſprinklings*, and mentions no other purifications, but ſprinklings, as inſtances of theſe divers *baptiſms*, it is evident, that if the ſacred writer underſtood *Greek*, ſprinkling is baptiſm.

AND ſince the word, wherever it is uſed in ſcripture for any thing beſides the chriſtian ordi-

nance,

nance, plainly ſignifies *pouring* or *ſprinkling*, except in the *ſingle* inſtance of *Naaman's* dipping himſelf in *Jordan*, which at moſt is a very doubtful one, we muſt naturally ſuppoſe, it is uſed in the ſame ſenſe, when it is applied to the chriſtian ordinance. This concluſion may have the more weight, becauſe it is deduced from the conceſſions of a critical writer on the other ſide of the queſtion.

THERE is another Greek word, *louo*, ſuppoſed to be ſometimes uſed for baptiſm, on which the author of the letters lays more weight: for, 'This, he tells us, is almoſt the conſtant word of the *Septuagint*, in thoſe very numerous places where bathing, or waſhing the *whole* body is commanded.'

THIS word is indeed frequently uſed for waſhing the body; ſometimes for waſhing the *whole* body; And if this were the conſtant and *only* word for baptiſm in the New Teſtament, here would be a plauſible argument for waſhing the whole body in baptiſm.—But it ſhould be obſerved, that this word is very ſeldom, if ever uſed for baptiſm. The author of the letters has cited about *ſixty* paſſages in the New Teſtament, as ſpeaking of baptiſm: Among all theſe, there are but *four* where this word is uſed. It is not certain, that baptiſm is the thing intended in *theſe*: But if it is, yet no argument can be drawn from them in favour of immerſion; but perhaps the contrary. Let us conſider them.

ONE is in Heb. 10. 23. *Let us draw near having our body waſhed*, (*leloumenoi ſoma*, being waſhed in the body) *with pure water*. Now a perſon is waſhed in his body, though water be poured only on a part of it. Thus when the wo-

man poured ointment on Chriſt's *head*, ſhe is ſaid to have anointed his *body*. And this waſhing is, in the preceding clauſe, expreſſed by *ſprinkling*.—*Having our hearts* ſprinkled *from an evil conſcience, and our body* waſhed *with pure water.*

ANOTHER paſſage is in Titus 3. 5. *He hath ſaved us* (*dialoutrou*) *by the waſhing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt, which he hath ſhed*, or poured on us. Now if baptiſm is here intended by the *waſhing of regeneration*, this text affords a plain argument for *affuſion* or *pouring* in baptiſm: For this waſhing denotes the *renewing of the Holy Ghoſt*, which is *poured on us*; and therefore, that there may be ſome reſemblance between the ſign and the thing ſignified, baptiſm ſhould be performed by *pouring*. The phraſe of *the pouring of the ſpirit* is an alluſion to *the pouring of water* in baptiſm.

A THIRD paſſage is in Eph. 5. 26. *That he might ſanctify it* (the church) *having cleanſed it with the waſhing of water by the word.* Now if baptiſm be here intended by waſhing, then the church is ſaid to be ſanctified and cleanſed by the baptiſmal waſhing: But how this waſhing is performed, whether by ſprinkling or plunging, is ſtill the queſtion. The Apoſtle ſays,* *ſprinkling—ſanctifieth to the purifying of the fleſh.* If then we will allow the Apoſtle to interpret his own phraſes, it is *ſprinkling* that ſanctifies and cleanſes the fleſh, and conſequently is the *waſhing* intended, when the church is ſaid to be *ſanctified* and *cleanſed by the waſhing of water.* In the 51ſt Pſal. 2d verſe, the Pſalmiſt prays, *Waſh me thoroughly from mine iniquity*

* Heb. 9. 13.

quity and cleanſe me from ſin. He adds ver. 7. *Purge me,* (in the *Greek* it is *ſprinkle me*) *and I ſhall be cleanſed.* What in the 2d ver. is called *waſhing thoroughly,* is in the 7th ver. called *ſprinkling*; and the latter is ſaid to *cleanſe,* as well as the former. The other paſſage is in 1 Cor. 6. 11. *But ye are waſhed, but ye are ſanctified,* &c. This is ſo nearly parallel to the former, that the ſame remarks are applicable to both, and therefore nothing further needs to be added.—It appears, I think, that the word which our author chiefly depends on to prove immerſion entirely fails him, and finally determines in favour of *affuſion.*

THIS now is the reſult of our enquiry. The word *baptizo,* is *but once,* and perhaps *never* uſed in all the Old Teſtament, where bathing the body is commanded. It is often uſed, in the New Teſtament, for *ſprinkling* or *pouring.* This is the *uſual,* if not the *only* word for baptiſm. It is uſed, to be ſure, in near ſixty paſſages. The word, *louo,* is ſometimes uſed for bathing the body, but never *certainly* uſed for baptiſm: There are but four paſſages, where it is pretended to be ſo uſed: And even here it is plainly ſynonymous with *pouring* or *ſprinkling.*

IT is indeed very remarkable, that the writers of the New Teſtament, when they ſpeak of the chriſtian ordinance of baptiſm, have generally (if not always) avoided that word, which in the *Septuagint* is uſed for bathing the body; and choſen a word of a more general ſignification; and if they have ever uſed the former, they have joined with it *ſprinkling* or *pouring,* as if it were on purpoſe to

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teach us, that plunging the whole body is a ceremony not required under the goſpel.

II. I APPREHEND we may obtain ſome ſatisfaction in the point before us, if we attend to thoſe paſſages of ſcripture, in which the uſes of baptiſm are manifeſtly alluded to.

1. One uſe of it is to repreſent the ſanctifying influence of the ſpirit. Chriſtians are ſaid to be *born of water and of the ſpirit*; and to be ſaved *by the waſhing of regeneration and renewing of the holy Ghoſt.* *Peter* ſays to the convicted *Jews*, *Be baptiſed and ye ſhall receive the gift of the holy Ghoſt.** The influence of the Spirit repreſented in baptiſm, is often expreſſed by *pouring* and *ſprinkling*; as in the before cited paſſages to *Titus*, and to the *Hebrews*. *The renewing of the holy Ghoſt, which he hath* poured *on us. Having the heart* ſprinkled *from an evil conſcience.* This *pouring out* of the Spirit is called, being *baptized* with it. That promiſe, *Ye ſhall be baptiſed with the holy Ghoſt*, is ſaid to have been fulfilled when Chriſt *ſhed* or *poured forth* the Spirit.†

2. BAPTISM repreſents the forgiveneſs of ſins. Hence theſe directions. *Be baptized for the remiſſion of ſins—Be baptized and waſh away thy ſins.*‡ Our ſins are waſhed away in Chriſt's blood. *The blood of Chriſt cleanſeth from all ſin. He hath waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood.*§ And this application of Chriſt's blood is expreſſed by *ſprinkling*. *Ye are come—to Jeſus the mediator of the new covenant and to the blood of* ſprinkling. *Elect according to the foreknowledge of God, through ſanctification*

* *Act. 2. 38*
‡ *Act. 2 38.* and ch. 22. 16.
† Act. 1. 5. and ch. 2. 33.
§ 1 Joh. 1. 7. and Rev. 1. 5.

nctification of the ſpirit unto—ſprinkling *of the blood f Chriſt.**

3. BAPTISM with *clean* water may denote the *implicity* of the Goſpel diſpenſation.

THE writer of the letters ſays, 'There does ıot appear, in all the five books of *Moſes*, any rite ɔf ſprinkling *meer* water, but it was water mixed ʍith blood, aſhes, &c." The *Moſaic* inſtitution was of a mixed nature: It conſiſted both of *moral* and *ceremonial* precepts. And the rites of purification were of a piece with the diſpenſation itſelf; for they were performed by water mixed with other ingredients. But the Goſpel diſpenſation is pure and ſimple, charged with few external rites, and theſe plain and eaſy. Thus. Ezek. 36. 25. God, foretelling the happineſs of his people in the Goſpel times, ſays, *Then will I* ſprinkle clean *water upon you and ye ſhall be clean.* 'This expreſſion,' ſays the author before mentioned, 'alludes to ſome *watery* purification in the law of *Moſes*.' But he ſays, 'There was no ceremony of unmixed water.' He thinks, 'it alludes to the water of ſeparation.' And yet he ſays, 'This was a *compoſition* of various ingredients.'

THE meaning of the paſſage then muſt be this. In the latter times I will give you a *pure* and *ſpiritual* diſpenſation, not burdened with ſuch rites and ceremonies as the preſent. The ſimple nature and ſpiritual deſign of it ſhall be repreſented by the great rite of initiation, which ſhall be the *ſprinkling* of *pure* water, and not the application of ſuch mixed compoſitions as are now in uſe.

Obſerve here: *Sprinkling* is ſaid to *cleanſe* the

* Heb. 12.24. 1 Pet. 1. 2.

perſon. *I will* ſprinkle *clean water upon you and ye ſhall be* clean, *and from* all *your filthineſs will I* cleanſe *you.* So waſhing Peter's *feet* only, was waſhing *him.* Peter ſays, *Thou ſhalt never waſh my* feet. Jeſus replies, *If I waſh* thee *not, thou haſt no part in me.* When he moved, that his *hands* and *head* might be waſhed too, Chriſt anſwered, *He that is waſhed, need not ſave to waſh his* feet, *but is clean* every whit.†

It has been ſaid, 'A miniſter may as well waſh the hands or feet, as ſprinkle the face of a perſon, in the name of the Trinity, and call it baptiſm.' I am far from aſſerting, that the validity of baptiſm depends upon the part to which the water is applied. There is however an obvious propriety in applying *it* to the *head. This* is the *principal* part of the body. It is the part which is uſually *uncovered*; and the water doubtleſs ſhould be applied to the *perſon*, rather than to his *clothes.* The ceremony of *benediction* was performed by laying the hands on the *head. Unction* was performed by *pouring* oil on the *head*, which was called anointing the *body.* The Holy Ghoſt was communicated by the *impoſition* of the Apoſtles *hands*: And they who had the Spirit communicated to them, were ſaid to be *baptized* with it; which makes it highly probable that baptiſm, the token of this communication, was performed by putting water on the *heads* of the perſons baptized. Accordingly, the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews* ſpeaks of *the doctrine of Baptiſms and laying on of hands.*‡

4. The Apoſtle, in 1. Cor. 10. ſpeaking of the *Jews* who came out of *Egypt*, ſays, *They were all baptized*

† *John 13. 8, 9, 10.* ‡ Chap. 6. 2.

baptized unto Moſes in the cloud and in the ſea. The Apoſtle here undoubtedly alludes to chriſtian baptiſm, and therefore we may ſuppoſe there was ſome reſemblance between baptiſm unto *Chriſt*, and that ancient baptiſm unto *Moſes*.—Now how were they baptized in the cloud and ſea ? Surely not by being *plunged* all over in water ; for *they went over dry ſhod* ; but only by being *ſprinkled* with ſome ſprays of the ſea, and drops from the cloud. This appears to me the moſt natural ſenſe of the expreſſion. The author of the letters indeed ridicules ſuch an interpretation, and ſays, ' Here is an alluſion to the cuſtom of *immerſion*, the *Iſraelites*, being covered by the cloud *over*, and by the water *on each ſide* of them.' But I think he has not mended the matter ; for though the waters ſurrounded them, yet (as he would have it underſtood) not even a ſpray touched them, nor a drop fell on them ; for then they would have been *ſprinkled*. It was a *dry* baptiſm : A baptiſm without water. *Jonah* might as well have been ſaid, to be baptized in alluſion to *immerſion*, when he went down into the ſides of the ſhip, and there lay, while a ſtorm hung over him.

5. BAPTISM ſignifies our obligation to renounce ſin and put on the character of Chriſt.

THE Apoſtle ſays, Rom. 6. 4. *We are buried with Chriſt by baptiſm into his death.* And Col. 2. 12. *Buried with him in Baptiſm.* The plain meaning is ; by baptiſm we are bound to die to ſin, and walk in newneſs of life, in conformity to the death and reſurrection of Chriſt. Our brethren imagine, theſe two paſſages afford a ſtrong argument for immerſion. They tell us, ' The

phraſe

phraſe of being *buried with Chriſt in Baptiſm*, alludes to the manner of baptiſm, which was a burial in the water; for if there were nothing like a burial, the phraſe would be very improper. But as well might they ſay, 'The mode of baptiſm muſt reſemble his *crucifiction*; for in the ſame paſſage the Apoſtle ſays, *We are baptized into his* death, *planted together in the* likeneſs *of his death—our old man is* crucified *with him.* But I am willing their argument ſhould have its full weight; for if they think *immerſion* can be proved from theſe *two* paſſages, where our conformity to Chriſt is expreſſed by our being *buried with him in baptiſm*, they muſt, if they will be conſiſtent with themſelves, allow that *ſprinkling* can be more clearly proved from thoſe *numerous* paſſages, where our juſtification through Chriſt's blood is expreſſed by the *ſprinkling of his blood*; and our ſanctification is expreſſed by the *ſprinkling of clean water*—by the *heart's being ſprinkled*—by the *ſpirit's being poured on us*, &c. The concluſion then from this argument will be, that *both* modes were admitted by the Apoſtles—both are valid and agreeable to the inſtitution. Let us no longer contend. This argument bids ſo fair to reconcile our brethren to our practice, that I could willingly leave them in full poſſeſſion of it.—I wiſh it good ſucceſs.—But if it be attended to, I am afraid, it will appear to have little weight.

How was Chriſt buried? Not as the dead are uſually buried among us, but as rich men were among the *Jews*, in an apartment cut out in the ſide of a rock. Such tombs were called *ſepulchres*

on high ;* becauſe they were made above ground. *Lazarus's* grave was of this ſort ; and he was laid in it in ſuch a poſition, that, upon his revival, *he came forth*, while he was *bound hand and foot ;* but he could not *walk*, till he was looſed. 'Looſe him and let him go.'† *Plunging* then no more reſembles Chriſt's *entombment* than *ſprinkling* does. If there were any circumſtances in his burial, which baptiſm can reſemble, it muſt be his *embalmment.*— It is ſaid, *Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, and wound the body of Jeſus in linen clothes with the ſpices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.*‡ And after this, *the women prepared ſpices and ointments and came to anoint his body.* The expreſſion of being *buried with Chriſt in baptiſm*, may allude to his body's being anointed with aromatic ointments at the time of his burial ; and this was done by *pouring* and *rubbing* them on the body. Accordingly when the woman *poured* the precious ointment on Chriſt's head, He ſays, *In that ſhe poured it on my body, ſhe did it to my burial. She is come to anoint my body to the burying.*§ Obſerve ; her pouring it only on his *head*, he calls pouring it on his *body* ; as on another occaſion, a woman's *dropping her tears* on his feet, he calls *waſhing* his feet ; and waſhing Peter's *feet* was waſhing *him.*— Now in alluſion to this manner of anointing, chriſtians are ſaid, *to be anointed with the ſpirit*, and *to have an unction from the Holy One, which teacheth them of all things.*‖ What is elſewhere called the *pouring* of the ſpirit *on them* ; and being *baptized* with the ſpirit ; is here expreſſed by the *anointing*

* Iſa. 22, 16. † Joh. 11. 44. ‡ Joh. 19. 40.
§ Mat. 26. 7. ‖ 2 Cor. 1. 21. and 1 Joh. 2. 20. 27.

of the ſpirit, in alluſion to the manner of anointing by *pouring* oil on the head.

III. It is time that we proceed to enquire, in what manner baptiſm was adminiſtered in the times of our Saviour and his Apoſtles.

Our brethren, and particularly the gentleman before mentioned, think it very manifeſt, that *immerſion* was the mode practiced in thoſe times, becauſe the perſons baptized are, in one or two inſtances, ſaid to go *into*, and come *out of* the water; becauſe ſome were baptized *in a river*; and becauſe places *abounding* with water were choſen for baptizing.

But let us not be carried away by the meer *ſound* of words without examining their ſenſe.

It is ſaid, Mat. 3. 16. *Jeſus being baptized came up* out of *the water*. The Greek phraſe (*apo udatos*) properly ſignifies, *from the water*; and therefore implies no more than that he went down *to it*; which he might properly be ſaid to do in whatever mode he was baptized. And as all natural collections of water are in low places, ſo the motions *to* and *from* them, muſt be *deſcending* and *aſcending*, which is ſufficient to account for the expreſſion, *he went up from the water*.

As Chriſt was without ſin, his baptiſm could not be in token of repentance and forgiveneſs; and, as he came to John after all the people were baptized, it could not be for an example of baptiſm to them: but it was evidently his public conſecration to the miniſtry, on which he was now entering. He choſe this ceremony of conſecration, in conformity to the law of God, which had inſtituted a ſimilar form for the ſeparation of the high

prieſt

prieſt to his office. And therefore he ſays, *Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteouſneſs.*

THE prieſts under the law, were to enter on the public ſervice of God at the age of *thirty years*; Chriſt, *when he began to be about thirty years of age*, was baptized. They were conſecrated to their office by *waſhing with water*, and by *anointing with oil*: He was publicly inaugurated into his miniſtry, by *baptiſm* and the *unction of the Holy Ghoſt*. God ſays to Moſes; *Aaron and his ſons ſhalt thou bring to the door of the tabernacle, and ſhalt waſh them with water;—and thou ſhalt pour the anointing oil on his head. Thou ſhalt make a laver of braſs and put water therein; for Aaron and his ſons ſhall waſh their* hands *and their* feet *therein.* And Moſes *brought Aaron and his ſons and waſhed them with water, and he poured the anointing oil on Aaron's head, and anointed him to ſanctify him.**

The prieſts were waſhed, not by the immerſion of their bodies into a fountain, but by the application of water to their *hands* and *feet* from a laver; they were *anointed* by oil poured on their *heads*; thus they were publicly inſtated in their office. Chriſt was baptized at Jordan; after his baptiſm he was anointed with the Holy Ghoſt, which viſibly deſcended upon him; and then he was declared from heaven to be the Son of God, and the people were commanded to hear him. Alluding to the manner, in which the prieſts were conſecrated, the prophet, in the perſon of Chriſt, ſays, *The ſpirit of the Lord is upon me, becauſe he hath* anointed *me to preach the goſpel.*† Peter, ſpeaking of the word which

* Exod. 29. 4, &c, Chap. 30, 19, &c. Lev. 8. 6, 12.
† Iſai. 61. 1.

which God ſent to Iſrael by Chriſt, ſays, *That* y
ye know, which began from Galilee, after the
tiſm which John preached, how God anointed J
of Nazareth with the Holy Ghoſt, and with pow

Now as in the account given by the Evan
iſts concerning Chriſt's baptiſm there is not
which neceſſarily imports an immerſion; as
baptiſm was in compliance with the inſtituted u
of conſecrating the ancient prieſts, and as ther
no mention of their *total* immerſion, but exp
mention of their *partial* waſhing; we may,
great probability, conclude, that his baptiſm wa
the application of water to a *part* of his body.*

But though he had been waſhed by im
ſion, this would no otherwiſe be an argument
immerſion now, than as an inſtance of the uſe of
word *baptize*, becauſe his baptiſm was a diffe
thing from that which he afterwards inſtituted
And as it appears highly probable, that his bap
was a *partial* waſhing, it was an example in f
of our opinion, that *baptiſm* does not ſignify a
immerſion; but may properly be performed by p
ing or ſprinkling water on a part of the body.

Again, Act. 8. 38. *They* (Philip and
Eunuch) *went down both into the water, and*
baptized him, and they came up out of the water.
This paſſage is thought to favor immerſion:
it no more proves that the *Eunuch* was *covered*
water, than that *Philip* was; for one is ſaid t
into the water, as much as the other. They m

t

* The laver in which the prieſts were waſhed was a po
veſſel of braſs, ſtanding on a ſingle foot, and not of ſufficient ca
for the immerſion of a human body.

be ſaid to go *into* the water, if they only ſtept into the edge of it. The words do not neceſſarily imply even ſo much as that; for the particles rendered *into* and *out of*, very often ſignify no more than *to* and *from*; as where Chriſt bids *Peter, go to the ſea and caſt his hook*—and where the *Queen* of the *South* is ſaid to *come* from *the utmoſt parts of the earth*. Now no man ſuppoſes, that Peter *plunged* himſelf *into* the ſea; or that the Queen of the South crept out *from under* ground; and yet the Greek particles here rendered *to* and *from* are the ſame, which in the caſe of the *Eunuch* are rendered *into* and *out of*. All therefore that we can conclude from this paſſage is, that they went down from the chariot to the water, there *Philip* baptized him, and then they returned: But in what *manner* he baptized him, we can no more learn from this paſſage, than from any other in the bible. But if the accounts of ancient and modern writers are true, he could baptize him only by *pouring* or *ſprinkling* water on him; for they ſay, that in the place here mentioned, nothing more than a ſmall ſpring can be found.

It is ſaid, Mark 1. 5. They were baptized of *John in the river of Jordan*. Hence ſome have concluded that they were *plunged* in the river. But this is a *forced* concluſion. Chriſt ſays to the blind man, whoſe eyes he had anointed with clay, *Go waſh in the pool of Siloam.** Here the phraſe of waſhing *in the pool*, intends no more than waſhing his *eyes* with the water of the pool. And with equal propriety *John's* hearers may be ſaid to be baptized

* Joh. 9. 7.

baptized *in Jordan*, if only *ſome* of the water of the river was *poured* on their *faces*.

We read John 3, 23, that *John baptized in Enon becauſe there was much water there*. It is aſked, 'Why ſhould he chuſe a place abounding with water to baptize in, if he did not baptize by immerſion?' I anſwer, Theſe words (*polla udata*) rendered *much water*, properly ſignify *many waters*, and may be underſtood of various rivulets or ſprings, which, travellers ſay, are the only waters there to be found, and not any large collections convenient for immerſion. If *John* baptized only by *affuſion*, a conſiderable quantity of water would be neceſſary to baptize ſuch multitudes, as went out to him from *Jeruſalem*, and all *Judea*, and all the region round about *Jordan*.—Yea, though ever ſo few of them had been baptized, there was good reaſon why he ſhould chuſe a place to preach in, that was well ſupplied with water; for the multitudes that attended on his preaching, in the wilderneſs, at a diſtance from their homes, would need much water for their refreſhment. It is by no means ſuppoſeable, that *ſuch numbers* could, here in the deſart, be provided with change of apparel proper for immerſion; and ſurely, in ſuch a *numerous* and *mixed* aſſembly, they were not baptized *naked*. The circumſtances of the caſe therefore lead us to ſuppoſe, they were baptized by *affuſion*.

We read, Act. 2. Of *three thouſand* baptized, in *only part of a day*, at the feaſt of pentecoſt. It cannot rationally be thought, that theſe were plunged. There does not ſeem to have been time

for

for it ; nor is it likely they had change of raiment, as they came to the feaſt without any expectation of ſuch an occaſion ; nor is it probable, they could be accommodated there with any convenient place for immerſion. If there were baths ſufficient for the purpoſe in the temple, yet it is very incredible, that the prieſts and officers of the temple ſhould be willing to accommodate the Apoſtles with them, in order to initiate theſe converts into a religion, which they were endeavoring by all means to ſuppreſs.

When we read of whole families baptized in their houſes, particularly of the *Jailor* and his family baptized at home, and at midnight too, in the ſame hour in which he believed, we cannot think, that a ſufficiency of water, and other conveniences for a decent immerſion, could be procured on ſo ſudden an occaſion.

When *Cornelius* and his friends received the goſpel, *Peter* aſks, not whether any man could hinder them from *going* to a fountain or river ; but *whether any man could forbid water*, i. e. hinder water from being provided, *that they ſhould not be baptized ?**

Paul ſeems to have been baptized in the houſe of *Judas*. There *Ananias* found him, delivered his meſſage to him, and laid his hands on him ; *And he received ſight forthwith and aroſe and was baptized.*†

It is worthy to be remarked, that though we read of baptiſms in various places, yet we have no account of any perſon's *going from* the place where he was, in order to be baptized in a fountain or river. They who were baptized in ſtreams and natural

* Act. 10. 47. † Act. 9. 18.

natural collections of water, are such as were found abroad, either in the wilderness, or on the road, when they first discovered their desire to be baptized.

IV. It now remains, that we consider, what was the usage of the primitive Church, upon which our brethren lay great weight in this controversy.

The author of the letters says, 'The whole christian church, for 1300 years successively from the time of the Apostles, understood by baptism, *immersion*, and so practised; *Sprinkling being only permitted on extraordinary occasions.*' This argument he often repeats, and depends much upon, as do most of the advocates for immersion: for they reckon, that the early practice of the Church in this matter may shew, what was the practice of the Apostles, because it is not likely, the apostolic practice would be early and generally disused.

The truth is, The manner of baptizing among the ancients was looked upon circumstantial, and no way essential to the validity of the ordinance. In the times near the Apostles, immersion was much practiced, but never asserted to be necessary: Far from this; sprinkling was expressly allowed, and frequently used, especially in cases of infirmity, haste, or want of water or other conveniences. This the Author himself concedes, that from the Apostles times for 1300 years, 'sprinkling was permitted on extraordinary occasions.' *Cyprian* (who wrote within about 150 years of the Apostles) speaking of sprinkling, says, 'in the sacrament of salvation (i. e. baptism) when necessity

neceſſity compels, the *ſhorteſt* ways of tranſacting divine matters, do, by God's grace, confer the whole benefit.' And it may not be impertinent to obſerve, that the ancients, who practiced immerſion, did uſually, after the body had been plunged, apply water to the face. So far therefore as the practice of the ancients is of weight, it proves all that we contend for. We do not ſay, immerſion is unlawful, or a meer nullity: We ſay, it is not neceſſary, but affuſion is ſufficient and agreeable to the divine word. And ſo ſaid the ancient church.

I HOPE what has been offered is ſufficient to juſtify the mode of baptiſm admitted in our churches, and to ſatisfy all, who have received baptiſm in this mode, that they have no need to ſeek immerſion. The queſtion concerning the mode is really of ſmall importance in itſelf, and nothing but the controverſy about it has made it otherwiſe. If our baptiſm is treated as a nullity, it is of importance to ſatisfy our minds: And if any have been thrown into doubts, I hope, the conſideration of what has been ſaid, will give them ſatisfaction.

PART II.

DISCOURSE II.

I COME now to the ſecond part o my deſign, which is to vindicate the right of Infant to baptiſm.

THE method in which I ſhall proceed is a follows. I ſhall firſt conſider the uſual objection againſt infant-baptiſm.—Next produce our argu ments in vindication of it.—Then briefly touch up on the reaſonableneſs and uſefulneſs of it.—Afte which I ſhall give a ſhort view of the practice of th church ſoon after the Apoſtles.—And then by wa of concluſion ſhall ſhew the abſurdity of ſeparation in churches on account of differences reſpectin baptiſm. The unwarrantableneſs of rebaptiza tion, &c.

I. I WILL diſtinctly conſider all the materia objections of our brethren againſt infant baptiſm, a I collect them from their writers, and particularl from the author of the letters before mentioned.

1. IT is ſaid, 'Chriſt has fully and plainl declared his mind about baptiſm; and becauſe h has not *commanded* the baptiſm of infants, he ha virtually *forbidden* it.'

Now though it ſhould be allowed, that ther is no *expreſs* command, yet if we can find a *virtua*

conſequential

conſequential command for it, that, I truſt, will be a ſufficient warrant: Otherwiſe what warrant ſhall we have to admit females to the Lord's ſupper? To obſerve the firſt day of the week as holy? To maintain public worſhip? *Theſe* and many other things, are no where enjoined, *in ſo many words*, but yet can clearly be ſhewn to be agreeable to the will of God. What command have our brethren to juſtify their practice? Where is the paſſage, which tells us, that baptiſm muſt be confined to the adult; and infants, though formerly admitted to the ſeal of the covenant, muſt now be admitted no more? They can find nothing of this ſort. But, I truſt, it will appear, that there is what may properly be called a command for *our* practice. If that paſſage in *Iſaiah*, *Lo, I have ſet thee for a light to the Gentiles*, was a *command* to the Apoſtles, to go and preach to the Gentiles, as it is ſaid to be;* then the direction given to *Abraham* our Father, to affix the token of the covenant to his *infant-ſeed*; the commiſſion given to the Apoſtles to diſciple *all nations* baptizing them; and the exhortation of *Peter, be baptized—for the promiſe is to you and your children*, are commands to admit infants to baptiſm; as we ſhall endeavour to ſhew hereafter.

2. It is objected, 'that in all the hiſtory of the 'New Teſtament there is no *example* of infant-bap-'tiſm; but the baptiſms we have an account of, 'are the baptiſms of profeſſed believers.'

But if there is no expreſs mention of infant-baptiſm, yet we cannot hence conclude, it was never practiſed; any more than we can conclude, that ſome

* Act. 13. 46.

ſome whole churches were formed without any baptiſm at all, becauſe it is no where ſaid, they were baptized. If a plain direct example be inſiſted upon, our brethren muſt certainly give up their notion of baptiſm; for *they* can find no example in their favor, whatever *we* can; as will be evident, if we only conſider what is the queſtion between us. It is not, whether adult proſelytes ſhould be baptized? But whether the infants of profeſſed believers ſhould be baptized? There are, it is true, inſtances enough of the baptiſm of adults, who had been converted from *Judaiſm* or *Paganiſm*: But *theſe* are nothing to the point; for we allow baptiſm to all adult believers, who have not been baptized in infancy. And the Apoſtles' baptizing *ſuch* is no argument, that *they* did not baptize *infants*, any more than our miſſionaries' baptizing adults among the natives, is an argument, that *they* do not baptize infants. The queſtion is merely this; are the infants of baptized believers to be admitted to baptiſm? Or to be rejected? If you ſay, they muſt be rejected and ſuffered to grow up before they are baptized; I aſk, Where is your example? Did the Apoſtles refuſe to baptize ſuch? Or among the adults whom they baptized, do you find any that were born of chriſtian parents? The hiſtory of the Acts contains a period of above thirty years, and the New Teſtament, a much longer period. There was time enough for two or three generations of infants to grow up to adult age. We have all along accounts of baptiſm. But it is remarkable, that in all this time, there is no intimation, that any one of the children of the early believers was baptized after he grew up; or that any one of thoſe adults

whom

whom the Apoſtles baptized, was born of believing parents. It is plain then, there is not one example, which in the leaſt, favors the opinion of our breth ren, which is this, *That the children of believers muſt be left to grow up before they are baptized.* They aſk, 'Is it not a little ſtrange, that we *no where* find children mentioned, if it were the Apoſtles' cuſtom to baptize them with their parents?' And I aſk; is it not very ſtrange, that we no where find the children of believers baptized after they grew up, if it was the Apoſtles' cuſtom to leave them unbaptized till they grow up? There is no example of this kind. But, we think, we have examples, and juſt ſuch examples in favor of our practice, as we ſhould have, upon ſuppoſition, the Apoſtles did baptize children with their parents.

Let us ſuppoſe infants were baptized: And what account ſhould we have of it? Would the hiſtory tell us, ſuch an infant by name of ſuch an age, and ſuch an one of ſuch an age, was baptized? No: This minuteneſs could not be expected concerning infants, who are ſeldom known, by their names or ages, out of the families, to which they belong. All we could expect to be told is this; ſuch a man was baptized and his family—ſuch a woman and her houſehold. And this we are told; *Stephanas's* houſhold, *Lydia* and her houſhold, the *Jailor* and all his were baptized; which are plain examples of families baptized upon the faith of their reſpective heads; as I ſhall ſhew more fully hereafter.

3. It is argued, 'that faith and repentance are the conditions of baptiſm; infants are not capable of theſe, and therefore not capable of baptiſm.'

But as well might our brethren ſay, 'Faith and repentance are conditions of ſalvation, and therfore infants, being incapable of theſe cannot be ſaved.' It is expreſsly ſaid, *He that believeth not ſhall be damned.* It is no where ſaid, He that believeth not, or repenteth not, ſhall not be baptized. Faith and repentance are required on ſeveral particular occaſions, when baptiſm was to be adminiſtered to adult perſons; but we find no general rule given to exclude from baptiſm ſuch as are incapable of faith and repentance. Our brethren will not exclude infants from ſalvation, upon the authority of thoſe texts, which make faith the condition of it; and ſurely, if they will be conſiſtent with themſelves, they cannot exclude them from baptiſm, upon the authority of thoſe texts, which make faith the condition of *that*; eſpecially ſince theſe texts plainly reſpect adult proſelytes. That *ſuch* muſt profeſs their faith we allow. But the apoſtolic practice ſhews, that upon their profeſſion, not only *they*, but their *houſholds* alſo ſhould be baptized; as under the ancient diſpenſation, when a *Gentile* became a proſelyte, not only he himſelf, but all his male children were circumciſed.

The inſtances in which faith, or repentance is enjoined previouſly to baptiſm, are only when adult perſons enquired what was neceſſary for *themſelves*. The queſtion was not concerning the qualification for baptiſm in *general*; but what was requiſite in *their own* caſe. 'What ſhall we do?'—'What hinders ME to be baptized?' The Apoſtles anſwer the queſtion, as it reſpected thoſe who propoſed it—*Repent ye and be baptized—If thou believeſt, thou mayſt be baptized.* Theſe directions only prove that

that a profeſſion of faith and repentance is neceſſary to the baptiſm of adults, which none deny; but, in no degree affect the right of infants.

Faith was as much required under the Old Teſtament in order to circumciſion, as it is under the new in order to baptiſm; but ſtill infants were circumciſed. The gentile proſelyte was not admitted to this rite, till he profeſſed his faith in the God of Iſrael; neither was the adult Jew. During the forty years that circumciſion was intermitted in the wilderneſs, a new generation came on the ſtage. Theſe were circumciſed ſoon after they paſſed over Jordan.* But previouſly to this, they had ſolemnly avouched the Lord to be their God. Now becauſe faith was a pre-requiſite to the circumciſion of adults, ſhall we conclude that no infants were circumciſed? This would be contrary to known fact. But this concluſion would be as juſt as the other, which determines againſt the baptiſm of infants, becauſe a profeſſion of faith was required in proſelytes. The truth is, all arguments drawn from ſpecial and particular caſes, are impertinent to an enquiry concerning a general rule of practice.

The author of the letters lays particular weight upon that paſſage, 1. Pet. 3. 21. *The like figure whereunto, even baptiſm, doth now ſave us, not the putting away the filth of the fleſh, but the anſwer of a good conſcience towards God.* 'Here,' he ſays, 'ſuch 'a condition of baptiſm is required, as infants are 'not capable of. The filth of their fleſh may be 'put away: But how ſhall they anſwer the good 'conſcience?' But it ſhould be obſerved, that the

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* Joſh. 5.

anſwer of a good conſcience is made the condition of *ſalvation*: Not of *baptiſm*. He might therefore rather have ſaid, ſuch a condition of *ſalvation* is required as infants are not capable of. *This* is a condition of ſalvation and baptiſm too in adults, but of neither in infants, who are not yet moral agents. The Apoſtle ſays, *Circumciſion is that of the heart*; but ſurely he did not mean, that *Jews* were incapable of the fleſhy circumciſion, until they were capable of profeſſing the circumciſion of the heart. Baptiſm, which is externally *the putting away the filth of the fleſh*, ſignifies our obligation *to anſwer a good conſcience toward God*. This obligation immediately takes place with reſpect to all, who are moral agents, and with reſpect to infants, when they become ſuch. Here is then no argument *againſt* the baptiſm of infants.

Let us ſee if there be not a plain argument *for* it. The Apoſtle is here ſpeaking of the preſervation of *Noah* and his family in the flood by means of the ark. The Apoſtle to the *Hebrews* ſays, *By faith, Noah, prepared an ark to the ſaving of his houſe.* It was by *Noah's* faith, that his family was brought into the ark, and preſerved in the flood. *The like figure whereunto, even baptiſm, doth now ſave us.* Where is the likeneſs? Plainly here. As *Noah* by faith prepared an ark, by which his houſe was ſaved; ſo the faith of the *chriſtian* parent brings his family within the privileges of the covenant. Salvation came to *Zaccheus's* houſe, in conſequence of *his* believing. *They* enjoyed ſome ſpecial privileges on account of *his faith*.

4. We read, Act. 8. 5. that *when the Samaritans believed Philip, preaching the things concerning*

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the kingdom of God, they were baptized both men and women. Upon this our author obſerves, 'The hiſtory is ſo particular as to mention both *men* and *women*, but there ſtops.—Had the ſacred hiſtorian been a little more explicit and ſaid, *men, women and children*, if the fact were really ſo; it would have prevented much doubt and controverſy.'

In anſwer to this, it is ſufficient to ſay; as the ſeal of the covenant under former diſpenſations had been affixed *only* to males, ſo there was good reaſon, why the hiſtorian ſhould be ſo particular, as to mention both *men* and *women*, i. e. males and females, (for theſe terms are in ſcripture applied to perſons of all ages) that it might appear, that the covenant-ſeal was, for the future, to be affixed to perſons of both *ſexes*. But as the ſeal had *always* been applied to *children*, there was no occaſion for his being ſo explicit, as to ſay, *men, women and children*, if the fact were really ſo; for children's right to the covenant-token had not then been made a queſtion; and they who knew the immemorial and univerſal uſage of admitting *Jewiſh* infants by circumciſion, and the infants of *Gentile* proſelytes by baptiſm, did not need to be inſtructed, that infants were entitled to baptiſm under the chriſtian diſpenſation. They muſt naturally ſuppoſe it, unleſs expreſsly told the contrary.

5. It is urged by ſome, 'that Jeſus Chriſt, who came to be our example, was baptized at adult age, and that we ought to imitate him herein.'

But his example is no more an argument againſt *infant* baptiſm, than againſt all baptiſm under the age of thirty years; for this was his age, when he was baptized, though he was certainly capable of

underſtanding

underſtanding the nature of baptiſm before he was *twelve*. Do our brethren think, that all are bound, in imitation of Chriſt, to live, unbaptized, twenty years after they arrive to the age of underſtanding?

The objection before us is founded in the ſuppoſition, that the baptiſm which Chriſt received, was the ſame, in its nature and deſign, with that which he himſelf afterwards appointed. If it was a different thing, no argument can be drawn from it in the preſent queſtion. If it was the ſame, then it at once removes the principal objection againſt the baptiſm of infants, taken from their incapacity for faith and repentance. For Jeſus was as incapable of faith in a mediator and repentance of ſin, as infants are; though from a different cauſe.

But, as I have before ſhewn, Chriſt's baptiſm was his public inauguration into his miniſtry, and therefore is impertinently adduced to diſprove the baptiſm of infants. When we are aſked, why Chriſt was not baptized in his infancy, it is ſufficient to anſwer, becauſe he did not take on him his public miniſtry in his infancy. To argue, that becauſe Chriſt was publicly conſecrated to his prieſthood at the age of thirty years, therefore none ſhould be given to God by baptiſm in their childhood, is an inconcluſive way of reaſoning.

Let it, however be obſerved, that, though he was not *baptized* in infancy, yet he was *dedicated* to God, by ſuch rites as were then in uſe. He was *circumciſed* on the eighth day; and on the fortieth day, he was brought by his parents into the temple, and there preſented to God, according to the law, which required, that every firſt-born male

ſhould

ſhould be holy to the Lord. This example ſhews, that parents ought publicly to dedicate their children to God in his appointed way; and, ſince baptiſm is now the appointed ceremony of dedication, it ſhews, that they ſhould preſent their children to him in baptiſm.*

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* If it could be proved, which certainly it never can, that John baptized only adults, yet no argument could hence be deduced againſt the right of infants to baptiſm under the goſpel diſpenſation; for the baptiſm which John adminiſtered, was not properly chriſtian baptiſm.

Though before Chriſt's time, baptiſm was in uſe among the Jews, yet it was not made the only initiating ſeal of the covenant, until after his reſurrection.

John was ſent to preach the baptiſm of repentance for the remiſſion of ſins, and thus to prepare men for that new diſpenſation of God's kingdom, which was not yet come, but was then *at hand*.— Chriſt inſtituted his baptiſm after this diſpenſation was come. John's baptiſm materially differed from this. The baptiſm, which Chriſt inſtituted was, *in the name of the* Father, *of the* Son, *and of the* Holy Ghoſt. John did not baptize in the name of the *Holy Ghoſt*; *for* ſome who had received his baptiſm, confeſſed that *they had not ſo much as heard, whether there were any* Holy Ghoſt. He did not baptize in the name of *the Son*, or in the faith, that *Jeſus was the Chriſt*; but *with the baptiſm of repentance, ſaying to the people, that they ſhould believe on him who ſhould come after him*; *that is, on Jeſus Chriſt*. Nor did he baptize into *Chriſt's death*, for this event had not then taken place. Had John taught that Jeſus of Nazareth was the Chriſt, and baptized the people in his name, and into this faith, they would not have *muſed in their hearts, whether John were the Chriſt*; nor have aſked him, *Why baptizeſt thou, if thou art not the Chriſt?* Nor would Jeſus have cautioned his diſciples, *to tell no man, that he was the Chriſt, till after his reſurrection*. John's baptiſm was deſigned to prepare men for the faith in Chriſt, when he ſhould be made manifeſt to Iſrael.

But what is deciſive in the caſe is, that ſome who had received John's baptiſm, were *afterwards* baptized in the name of the Lord Jeſus.

Among the many thouſands *from all Judea and Jeruſalem*, to whom Peter preached on the day of penteceſt, it cannot be doubted, that there were multitudes, who had been baptized by John; *for there went out to him all the land of Judea, and they of Jeruſalem, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him*. And yet Peter ſays to them, without diſtinction, *Repent and be baptized*, every one of you, in the name of Jeſus Chriſt.

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6. The incapacity of children for the ends of baptiſm or for any benefit from it, is often urged as an argument againſt their being baptized.

But really the queſtion is, Whether there be any divine warrant for their baptiſm? If there is, it becomes us to practiſe accordingly, and not to arraign the wiſdom of God. That there are ſome rational ends to be anſwered by infant baptiſm, and that it is a gracious and beneficial inſtitution, I truſt, will appear under another head, where this objection will receive a full anſwer. In the mean time it may ſuffice to obſerve, that infants are now as capable of the ends of baptiſm, as they were anciently of the ends of circumciſion. They may be brought into covenant with God—may have privileges made over to them—may receive the ſeal and token of privileges—may be laid under

An inſtance ſtill more plain we have in the beginning of the 19th Ch. of Acts. Paul finding at Epheſus twelve diſciples, ſaid to them, *Have ye received the Holy Ghoſt ſince ye believed?* And they ſaid to him, *We have not ſo much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghoſt.*— And he ſaid to them, *Unto what then were ye baptized?* And they ſaid, *Unto John's baptiſm. Then ſaid Paul, John verily baptized with the baptiſm of repentance, ſaying unto the people, that they ſhould believe on him, who ſhould come after him,* that is, on Jeſus Chriſt. *When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jeſus. And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Ghoſt came upon them, &c.*

When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jeſus. The meaning cannot be, that when the people heard *John*, they were by *him* baptized *in the name of the Lord Jeſus*; becauſe then it will follow, that Paul laid his hands on all the people whom John baptized; for they, who are here ſaid to be *baptized*, are evidently the perſons on whom Paul *laid his hands*. But the ſenſe muſt be, that when theſe twelve diſciples who had been baptized by John, now heard Paul, they were baptized by him. It follows then that John's baptiſm, being neither in the name of Chriſt, nor of the Holy Ghoſt, was different from that which Chriſt inſtituted; and no arguments can be drawn from the former, to determine the mode, or ſubjects of the latter; nor can the repetition of chriſtian baptiſm be juſtified from this example of Paul.

under obligations to obey the goſpel, as the *Jewiſh* infants by circumciſion became debtors to obey the law—and may become ſubjects of that juſtification through Chriſt's blood, that renovation of the Spirit, and title to eternal life, which are ſignified and repreſented in baptiſm.

I have now given you a view of all the material arguments, which are brought to diſprove infant baptiſm. And what has been ſaid in anſwer to them is, I think, ſufficient to ſhew, that they have no real weight. The way is now prepared to bring forward our arguments in vindication of this point, which was the ſecond thing propoſed.

II. We will here take a diſtinct view of the principal arguments in defence of the right of believer's infants to baptiſm, and endeavour to eſtabliſh them againſt the cavils of our opponents, and particularly the author of the letters before mentioned.

1. Our firſt argument ſhall be taken from the *Abrahamic* covenant together with the Apoſtle's explanation of it.

In the 17th chap. of Gen. we find, that God made a covenant with *Abraham* and his ſeed, into which his infants were expreſsly taken, together with himſelf, by the ſame rite and token. This covenant comprehended not only his natural ſeed, but the ſtranger who was not of his ſeed. It was a *ſpiritual* covenant. The capital promiſe of it was *I will be a God to thee and thy ſeed after thee.*— This was the ſame covenant, which now ſubſiſts, and which we are now under in this goſpel-age, as the Apoſtle expreſsly teaches us, in the 4th chap. to Rom. and 3d chap. to Gal. where he argues from the covenant with *Abraham*, to ſhew the na-

ture and extent of the goſpel-covenant. He teſt fies, that all believers under the goſpel, wheth *Jews* or *Gentiles*, are the ſpiritual ſeed of *Abraha* and conſequently *heirs of the promiſe* made to him— that the covenant made with *Abraham* was *confir ed of God in Chriſt*—that the law which was give afterwards did not diſannul the covenant, or vaca the promiſe—that the goſpel was preached to *A braham*, in that promiſe of the covenant with hin *In thee ſhall all nations be bleſſed*—that the bleſſin of *Abraham* is come upon the *Gentiles* throug Chriſt—that the promiſe made to *Abraham* is ſu to all the ſeed, not only to that which is of th law, but to that alſo which is of the faith of *Abr ham*, who is the father of us all, as it is written, *have made thee a father of many nations*—that the who are of faith are the children of *Abraham*, an to *Abraham* and his ſeed were the promiſes made— and much more to the ſame purpoſe.

Now if we are the ſeed of *Abraham*, for whoi the covenant with him was eſtabliſhed, and are ſti under the ſelf-ſame covenant, then the ſame priv leges that were herein granted to him, belong t us. One grant of that covenant was, that infan ſhould be received with their parents by the ſam ſign and ſeal; and therefore we, as the ſeed o *Abraham*, may claim this privilege for *our* infant Yea, God not only allowed, but *commanded*, tha the appointed token of the covenant ſhould be a fixed to every male child who was not under eigh days old. Here then is a plain command given t *Abraham* our father, and conſequently to us h children, to apply the token of this very covenan which we are now under, to our infant-ſeed. Th

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only queſtion is, whether there be now any token of the covenant? Had circumciſion been continued, none could doubt but infants were ſtill ſubjects of it by virtue of the command given to *Abraham*, unleſs they would expunge the 4th chap. to Rom. and 3d to Gal. Circumciſion has ceaſed. But has Chriſt appointed any token of the goſpel covenant? Baptiſm is certainly ſuch. *This* then is to be applied to the ſame ſubjects as *that* was. If there was an expreſs command to affix the covenant ſeal to infants in *Abraham's* time, and the covenant ſtill remains; then the covenant-ſeal, whatever it is, ought to be affixed to infants now, unleſs the command has been repealed. The change of the *ſeal* makes no change of the *ſubject*. There muſt be a command to warrant our rejecting the *old ſubject*, as well as to juſtify our dropping the *old ſeal*. If our brethren aſk, Why we have diſcontinued circumciſion, and now make uſe of baptiſm? We anſwer, Chriſt has ſo commanded. Let them produce as good authority for affixing this *new* ſeal of the ſame covenant to believers *only*, and *not* to their children, and we will comply with them. We demand of them to ſhew us ſome plain, poſitive order of Chriſt to deny the ſeal of the covenant to thoſe ſubjects, to whom it was firſt ordered to be applied. Until ſuch order appears, we boldly affirm, that the old command remains, and to act in diſobedience to it is preſumption.

To evade the force of this argument, our brethren aſſert, that 'the chriſtian church is an inſtitution entirely new; a ſtructure erected on a new foundation, diſtinct from, and unconnected with the foundation of the patriarchal and jewiſh church;'

church ;' for they eaſily ſee, that if the chriſtian church is the ancient church, continued under the ſame covenant which was made in ancient times, then the admiſſion of children with their parents into this church, will ſtand ſecure on the foot of the former inſtitution. It may not therefore be improper to purſue our preſent argument a little farther.

The foundation of the ancient church is, *the diſcovery of God's mercy to fallen men through a redeemer.* This diſcovery was firſt made to Adam in the ſentence on the tempter ; and afterward more fully to Abraham in the promiſe already mentioned. *This* God expreſsly calls his *everlaſting* covenant. *This* is always conſidered by Moſes and the prophets, as the ground on which the faith and hope of the Jewiſh church reſted. Moſes ſays,* 'Ye ſtand all of you before the Lord, your *wives* and *little ones*, that thou ſhouldſt enter into covenant with him, that he may be *a God to thee, as he hath ſworn to Abraham.* The prophet Jeremiah,† foretelling the goſpel diſpenſation, deſcribes it by an alluſion to the covenant with Abraham, which he diſtinguiſhes from the covenant of peculiarity made with the Jews at Sinai, when they came out of Egypt. The apoſtle to the Hebrews ‡ applies the prophet's deſcription to the goſpel-ſtate. The old covenant, which, he ſays, was decayed and ready to vaniſh, is not the covenant with *Abraham* ; for *this* he calls the covenant which God would make in the latter days, or would explicitly renew in the goſpel time, promiſing, *I will be their God* : but the

* Deut. 29. † Chap. 31. 31. ‡ Chap. 8.

the old covenant, which was to vaniſh away, no more to be renewed, is the *ceremonial* covenant, or that which God made with the Jews, *when he brought them out of Egypt.*

When the prophets foretel the call of the gentiles, they ſpeak of them as joining themſelves to the church then ſubſiſting. In the 49th chap. of Iſaiah, God comforts Sion, the Jewiſh church, in her deſpondency, with a promiſe that he will never forſake her, but her walls ſhall be continually before him. 'Lift up thine eyes round about,' ſays her God, 'and behold! All theſe gather themſelves together, and come unto THEE. The children, which thou ſhalt have after thou haſt loſt the other, ſhall ſay, The place is too ſtrait for me.—Then ſhalt thou ſay, Who hath begotten me theſe, ſeeing I have loſt my other children? Thus ſaith the Lord, Behold, I will lift up my hand to the Gentiles—and they ſhall bring thy ſons, in their arms, and thy daughters ſhall be carried on their ſhoulders.'—The children of theſe Gentile proſelytes are called the ſons and daughters of the church. They are brought in the arms of their parents to the church 'to be nurſed at her ſide.'—No words can more plainly deſcribe the admiſſion of Gentile proſelytes into the very church which was then in being, and the ſolemn dedication of their children, as members of the church with them. Similar repreſentations are frequent in the prophetic writings.

The words of our Saviour, in 10th chap. of John, are full to our purpoſe. 'Other ſheep I have which are not of this fold; them alſo I muſt bring.' I muſt bring them into this fold, the Jewiſh

church ; for what other fold was there then exiſting ? ' And they ſhall hear my voice ; and there ſhall be one fold and one ſhepherd.'

The apoſtle Peter,* exhorting the Jews to repentance, points them to the Saviour, whom the prophets foretold, and ſays, ' Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant, which God made with our fathers, ſaying, *In thy ſeed ſhall all the families of the earth be bleſſed :* unto you firſt God hath raiſed up his ſon, and ſent him to bleſs you.'

Paul, in the epiſtle to the Epheſians, treats explicitly on this ſubject. He ſays, ' Ye were once afar off, without Chriſt, aliens from the Commonwealth of Iſrael, and ſtrangers from the covenants of promiſe. But now in Chriſt ye are made nigh. Chriſt is our peace, who hath made *both one* ;' i. e. hath united both Jews and Gentiles. Now therefore ye are ' no more ſtrangers and foreigners, but *fellow-citizens with the ſaints, and of the houſhold of God ;* and are built on the foundation of the *apoſtles and prophets*, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief corner ſtone.' The prophets and apoſtles laid the ſame foundation. The prophets foretold a Saviour to come ; the apoſtles preached this Saviour already come. The predictions of the former, and the doctrines of the latter are the ſame foundation, the corner-ſtone of which is Chriſt himſelf. The apoſtle adds, ' Ye have heard of the diſpenſation of the grace of God, that the gentiles ſhould be *fellow heirs*, and of *the ſame body* and *partakers of his promiſe* in Chriſt by the goſpel.'

The Jews, who were baptized on the day of pentecoſt, believed that Jeſus was Lord and Chriſt,

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* *Act. 3.*

evidence derived from the prophets ; and were
nitted to baptiſm on the foot of the *promiſe* made
heir *fathers*. The ſame promiſe, which was
foundation of the ancient church, and of which
umciſion was the ſeal, is alledged by the apoſ-
is a reaſon for the baptiſm of theſe Chriſtian Jews
their children, and as many as God ſhould call
n among the gentiles. The chriſtian church here
ds on the old foundation ; and to this church
e added thoſe who afterwards were baptized.
n the 11th chap. to the Romans the apoſtle ex-
sly declares, that the gentile-believers are graft-
nto *the ſame olive-tree* from which *ſome* of the
s, the natural branches, were broken off by
elief. ‘ If ſome of the branches, were broken
and thou, being a wild olive, wert grafted in
ng them,’ the branches that remained, ‘ and
n them partakeſt of the root and fatneſs of the
e tree, boaſt not againſt the branches ; for
u beareſt not the root, but the root thee. They
e broken off by unbelief, and thou ſtandeſt by
n.’ It is the ſame root, which beareth the
ural, and the ingrafted branches. *Some* of the
ural branches were broken off—not all.—The
eving Jews continued ſtill in the ſame old ſtock,
which they had before ſtood, and in which be-
ing gentiles were ingrafted. The gentiles were
inſerted into a *new* ſtock, a tree *lately grown*
nor were believing Jews lopt off from the old
to be inſerted with gentiles into a new one :
the former *remained* in the old ſtock, and the
er were grafted in *among them*, to partake *with*
n of the root and fatneſs of the *ſame olive*, which
formerly nouriſh them. And it is obſervable,

that

the *Goſpel* covenant, the Apoſtle plainly teaches that baptiſm is now the appointed token of the goſpel covenant, none will deny: The conſequence is obvious; baptiſm now ſtands in the place of circumciſion, for it is the initiating ſeal of that very covenant, of which circumciſion was the ſeal formerly.

Again. The Apoſtle ſays, Rom. 4. 11. *Abraham received the ſign of circumciſion, a ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith.* It is plain from this paſſage, that circumciſion was a ſign of ſpiritual bleſſings, the bleſſings of the covenant of grace: And not (as ſome abſurdly pretend) meerly a ſign of worldly privileges, ſuch as a right to the land of *Canaan*, a numerous iſſue, &c. There were, it is true, temporal bleſſings promiſed to *Abraham* and his ſeed. But to argue from hence, that the covenant with him was a meer temporal covenant, and that circumciſion was only a ſeal of it *as ſuch*, is as abſurd, as it would be to ſay, The goſpel is a meer worldly inſtitution, becauſe it has the promiſe of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. The Apoſtle, in this paſſage, repreſents circumciſion in quite a different light, as eſpecially and eminently a ſeal of *ſpiritual* bleſſings.—That *baptiſm* is ſuch, all allow: And therefore it comes in the room of circumciſion, and ſtands in the place in which that once ſtood.

Farther; Theſe two rites, though different in their outward form, are the *ſame* in their ſpiritual uſe and ſignificancy. Circumciſion ſignified our native corruption: ſo does baptiſm. Circumciſion pointed out the neceſſity of inward purity and ſpiritual renovation: ſo does baptiſm. *That* repreſented

ented our juſtification by the blood of Chriſt: ſo does *this*. *That* was a ceremony of admiſſion into God's church: ſo is *this*. *That* denoted men's relation to God and obligation to obey his law. *This* alſo denotes our relation to Chriſt and obligation to obey his goſpel.

But the apoſtle puts this matter out of all doubt, when he calls *baptiſm the circumciſion of Chriſt*, and urges chriſtians being *baptized*, as a reaſon why they need not be *circumciſed*.

He ſays, Col. 2. 11. 12. *Ye are complete in him*, (in Chriſt) *in whom ye alſo are circumciſed with the circumciſion made without hands, in putting off the body of the ſins of the fleſh by the circumciſion of Chriſt, buried with him in baptiſm.* The apoſtle here calls *baptiſm*, the *circumciſion of Chriſt*, or the chriſtian circumciſion. But he calls it by this name without any propriety, unleſs it ſtands in the place of circumciſion.

The author, whom I have ſeveral times mentioned, labours much to evade the force of this paſſage. He ſays, By *the circumciſion of Chriſt* is meant, 'the *ſpiritual* circumciſion,' or renovation of the heart, in diſtinction from 'the *literal* circumciſion.' But this cannot be the meaning of the phraſe: For the inward ſpiritual circumciſion is mentioned in the preceding branch of the ſentence, under the name of *the circumciſion made without hands*. And if we take both phraſes to ſignify the *ſame*; then we ſhall make the words to run thus. *Ye are circumciſed with the ſpiritual circumciſion, in being circumciſed by the ſpiritual circumciſion.* Such an unmeaning repetition never dropt from the Apoſtle.

The writer ſays, 'That to guard the Coloſſians

againſt

againſt the danger of being ſeduced to the obſervance of circumciſion, the Apoſtle tells them.' 'They had received the *ſpiritual* circumciſion—and therefore the *literal* circumciſion was not neceſſary.' But how did this ſpiritual circumciſion or internal renovation prove, that the literal circumciſion was not neceſſary? Circumciſion uſed to be neceſſary for good men: Why not now? According to this interpretation, external ordinances are not needful for true chriſtians, but only for ſinners. Thoſe among the Coloſſians, who were not ſure they had received the *ſpiritual* circumciſion, could not apply this argument; and therefore, according to our author, muſt ſtill obſerve the *literal* circumciſion. Beſides; the ſame argument would prove, that they need not be baptized; for if they had received the ſpiritual waſhing of ſanctification, what occaſion was there for the literal waſhing of baptiſm? And yet, according to him, none muſt be baptized, but actual believers; ſo that, if we admit his conſtruction of the paſſage, we muſt diſallow of all baptiſm.

Our author ſays, 'In the Apoſtles days, the chriſtians converted from Judaiſm were zealous to incorporate circumciſion with chriſtianity.—Do the Apoſtles inſtruct them, that they need not be ſo tenacious of *one rite*, ſince another is appointed *in its ſtead?* Such an obſervation would have been much to the purpoſe—but nothing can be found of it in their reaſonings to diſſuade chriſtians from circumciſion.'

But the gentleman is under a great miſtake. The *Jewiſh* converts were zealous to incorporate, not meerly circumciſion, but the whole ceremonial law, with chriſtianity. They contended for circumciſion

ciſion as a rite binding to the obſervance of the whole law, without which, they imagined, chriſtianity would be incomplete. From this notion *Paul* labors to reclaim them, and ſecure others. He does not oppoſe circumciſion *ſimply*; if he had, he would not have circumciſed *Timothy*, nor have approved infant circumciſion among the jewiſh believers; but he oppoſed it, in the ſenſe above mentioned as binding men to keep the ceremonial law in order to acceptance with God. Though he had, upon prudential reaſons, circumciſed *Timothy*, yet he gave no place to thoſe who would *compel Titus* to be circumciſed, that they might bring him and others into bondage to the law. Now what argument does he uſe to diſſuade the Coloſſian believers from circumciſion and the obſervance of the law? It is this; They had received *baptiſm*, the chriſtian circumciſion, and were now bound to obey the goſpel, which, being a complete inſtitution, had ſuperſeded the law. Thus he reaſons with them in the place before referred to. *Beware leſt any man ſpoil you through philoſophy and vain deceit, after the rudiments of the world and not after Chriſt—for ye are complete in him*, and ſo need not add the ritual law to his goſpel: *in whom ye are circumciſed—with the circumciſion of Chriſt*, or chriſtian circumciſion, *being buried with him in baptiſm.—Wherefore if ye be dead with Chriſt from the rudiments of the world*; if by baptiſm into his death ye are freed from the rites of the *moſaic* diſpenſation, *why, as though living in the world*, or under that diſpenſation, *are ye ſubject to ordinances?* You ſee, that the Apoſtle urges their baptiſm into Chriſt, as a reaſon why they ſhould not be ſubject to circumciſion, and the rites of the ceremonial law, for which the Jews contended.

He uſes the very argument to diſſuade them from circumciſion, which this author ſays, he would uſe, if baptiſm came in its place: And therefore, by his own conceſſion, baptiſm does come in its place. And if ſo, then it is undeniably to be adminiſtered to the ſame ſubjects, even the infants of believing parents.

We are told,* that ſome of the believing *Jews* at *Jeruſalem* were much diſpleaſed, when they heard that *Paul* taught the *Jews*, who were among the *Gentiles*, that they ought not to *circumciſe their children*. Would it have ſatisfied ſuch zealous contenders for infant circumciſion, to have told them, baptiſm now came in the place of that ancient ceremony, but yet muſt not be applied to their children? This would but have provoked them the more. Had it not been the uſage of the apoſtles to admit children with their parents into covenant by the ſame rite, certainly the *Jews*, among other objections againſt the goſpel, would have urged this, that it excluded their children from covenant privileges. They were apt enough to make objections, and ſince we find none of this ſort, we may conclude, there was no room for any.

That infants, under the *patriarchal* and *moſaic* diſpenſations, were admitted into covenant by a particular token, is certain. It is evident, this was conſidered as a privilege. It is allowed, that the goſpel confers greater privileges than former diſpenſations: But if children are now ſhut out of covenant, then the goſpel, inſtead of enlarging, has in this reſpect diminiſhed our privileges.

But ſays our author, 'The infallibility of the *Roman*

* Act. 21. 21.

Roman church may be proved in the ſame manner; as thus: The people of God under the Old-Teſtament enjoyed the benefit of infallibility. The high Prieſt had the Urim and Thummim, by which the mind of God was known, &c. conſequently there muſt be infallibility in the chriſtian church; otherwiſe the leſs perfect diſpenſation of *Moſes* will have a great privilege beyond the *chriſtian.*'

The truth is, The *chriſtian* diſpenſation has this privilege far beyond the *moſaic.* The additional revelation of the goſpel diſcovers the mind of God as infallibly, and far more fully and extenſively than ever it was diſcovered by Urim and Thummim.—Such *occaſional* diſcoveries now are not needed, ſince we have a *complete, ſtanding* revelation.

The author of the letters tells us, that circumciſion, 'that Old-Teſtament rite, was a *uſeleſs, burthenſome, injurious* ceremony, and treated as ſuch by the Apoſtles.' And hence he concludes, baptiſm cannot come in its room to be adminiſtered to infants, as that was. But where do the Apoſtles treat circumciſion in this manner? The *ceremonial law* indeed is conſidered as a yoke of bondage; as *burthenſome*, not *injurious*, for it would ill become the teachers of religion to repreſent God as *injuring* his people by his inſtitutions: But *circumciſion*, conſidered as a token of the covenant, is treated as a great privilege.* *What advantage hath the Jews? And what profit is there of circumciſion? Much every way.* It was a great privilege for the children of *Jews* to have God for their God, in ſuch a ſenſe as he was not the God of *heathen* children; to be born to the enjoyment of the oracles and

* Rom. 3. 1.

and ordinances of God; and to be under the care of parents, who were ſolemnly bound to bring them up in the knowledge and ſervice of the God of *Iſrael.* And if the profit of circumciſion was *much every way*, then the loſs by its abolition is *much every way*, unleſs there be ſomething appointed in its room.

It is often ſaid, 'Circumciſion was applied only to *males*: Baptiſm is deſigned for both ſexes, therefore they are not parallel ordinances, nor can we argue from the one to the other.'

But it is certain, they are parallel in their main deſign, as initiating ſeals of the ſame covenant. And *females* were admitted into covenant, as well as *males*, though no viſible token was appointed for them. Every *firſt-born* male was to be publicly preſented to God in token of the obligation of the *whole family* to be holy to him; for *if the firſt fruits be holy, ſo is the lump.* So the parent's dedicating his *males* to God by circumciſion, was a token that *all* his children belonged to God. Accordingly God equally claims an intereſt in children of both ſexes, by virtue of the covenant relation of their parents. God ſays to the *Jewiſh* church, Ezek. 16. 7. *I entered into covenant with thee, and thou becameſt mine.* And then he complains, ver. 20. *Thou haſt taken thy* ſons *and thy* daughters, *which thou haſt born* UNTO ME, *and theſe thou haſt ſacrificed. Thou haſt ſlain* MY CHILDREN. So Deut. 29. 10. *Ye ſtand this day before the Lord—all the* men *of Iſrael, your* little ones, *and your* wives, *that thou ſhouldſt enter into covenant, that he may be unto thee a God—as he hath ſworn to Abraham.* They were all admitted into covenant, though the *males*

only

only received the viſible token. But under the goſpel there is no diſtinction of male and female, but all are one in Chriſt, the viſible ſeal being affixed to one as well as the other. In this reſpect the goſpel diſpenſation is more large and free than the former, that it makes no diſtinction of *nation* or *ſex*. And ſhall we think it was intended to be contracted in another reſpect, by caſhiering *all children*, who are more than half of mankind?

The author before mentioned tells us, that 'children were admitted to the paſſover; and hence we may infer their right to the Lord's ſupper; as well as from their circumciſion infer their right to baptiſm.'

It ſeems probable, that perſons of all ages partook of the *firſt* paſſover mentioned Exod. 12. which was in ſome reſpects ſingular, and different from ſucceding paſſovers. But it appears from Luke 2. 42. that it was not the *cuſtom of the feaſt*, for parents to bring their children to it, until they were about *twelve years old*; at which age, they might be able to enquire of their parents, *What mean ye by this ſervice?* And at this age, no doubt, many are capable of underſtanding the nature and end of the Lord's ſupper.*

* 'Children at the age of 12 years, were brought by their parents to the temple: And from that time they began to eat of the paſſover and other ſacrifices. Hyrcanus in Joſephus, B. 12. Chap. 4. ſays, The Jewiſh law forbids the ſon to eat of the ſacrifices, before he has come to the temple, and there himſelf preſented an offering to God.' (Pol. Synop. in Exod. 12. 26.)

The law preſcribed, that when the Jews were come into the land, which God would give them, all their males ſhould appear before him every year at the paſſover, in the place which he appointed. But it is added, *They ſhall not appear before me empty, but every one according to the gift of his hand.* (Deut. 16. 16. and alibi. vide. Marg.)

The male, or men children, who were to appear before God, in their appointed place, to eat of the paſſover, were only ſuch as could bring a gift in their hand; or preſent an offering for them-

But if infants had been uſually admitted to the paſſover, it would not in the leaſt weaken our argument from circumciſion; for the paſſover was not a ſeal of the *Abrahamic* covenant (it being appointed more than 400 years after that covenant was made) but one of the *moſaic* rites. Now the ritual law is ſuperſeded by the goſpel; but the *Abrahamic* covenant remains. The Lord's ſupper is a commemorative ſign, intended to ſhew forth Chriſt's death and bring him to our remembrance. But baptiſm is a token of admiſſion to the viſible privileges of God's people; and therefore infants are capable of *this*, though not of the other.

Some perhaps will aſk, How could baptiſm come in place of circumciſion, when it appears to have been in uſe before circumciſion, ceaſed? Let me aſk another queſtion, How could *Solomon* reign in the

ſelves. This probably is the law to which Hyrcanus alludes. Bp. Patrick, who was very learned in the Jewiſh laws and cuſtoms, ſays, 'When children were twelve years old, their parents were bound to bring them to the temple, at the paſſover, where, ſeeing what was done in this feſtival, they would be led to enquire, what mean ye by this ſervice?' (Comment, in Exod. 12.)

As the end of the paſſover was to perpetuate the memory of the deliverance from Egypt, and as the expreſs reaſon why children were to attend it in the appointed place, was that they might be inſtructed in that wonderful deliverance, parents could not view themſelves as bound to bring their children to the ſolemnity, before they were capable of enquiring and underſtanding what was meant by it. Luke tells us, (Chap. 2. 42.) that the parents of Jeſus went up every year to Jeruſalem at the feaſt of the paſſover: and when he was 12 *years old*, they went up *after the cuſtom of the feaſt*. Their going *after the cuſtom of the feaſt*, doubtleſs intends their taking their ſon with them, who was now 12 years old: for it appears that he accompanied them; and this is the firſt time we hear of his going to the feſtival. It may alſo be obſerved, that the *males* only were required to appear before God at the paſſover; and none can imagine, that infants and ſucklings were taken from their *mother's* arms to be carried to, and detained at the temple, during the continuance of ſo long a ſolemnity.

the place of *David* as his ſucceſſor, when he began to reign before *David* was dead? There is no more difficulty in one queſtion, than in the other. Though baptiſm was in uſe, yet it was not made the peculiar initiating ſeal of the goſpel-covenant until after Chriſt's reſurrection.

It has been enquired, 'If baptiſm ſucceeds circumciſion, why were thoſe baptized, who had already been circumciſed?' We anſwer,

1. We think it has been proved, that both theſe ordinances were inſtituted as ſeals of the ſame gracious covenant; and therefore the right of infants to baptiſm will not at all depend on the ſolution of this queſtion.

2. It is evident from the 15, and 21 chapters of Acts, that *infant circumciſion* was practiſed, with apoſtolic approbation, by the *Jewiſh* believers in the *Chriſtian* church in Jeruſalem, and in other churches, by the *Jews* who were members of them. For tho' the apoſtles and elders agreed, that infant circumciſion ought not to be required of *Gentile* believers; yet they allowed and approved it among the *Jewiſh* converts, who, having been accuſtomed to it, and knowing it to have been a uſage from the time of Abraham, could not at once, be perſuaded to relinquiſh it for another rite.

That infant circumciſion was not now regarded by the apoſtles merely as a *ceremony* of the *Moſaic* law, is manifeſt; becauſe, in this view, as we have before ſhewn, they utterly diſallowed it, and ſtrenuouſly oppoſed thoſe who contended for it. They muſt therefore have regarded it, as that 'ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith,' which was appointed to Abraham, and continued under the patriarchal and

moſaic

moſaic diſpenſations. In the chriſtian church, it for a time held the ſame place among the *Jewiſh*, as baptiſm held among the *Gentile* believers. Hence it follows, that the ſeal of the covenant was applied to the *infants* of believers, in the time, and with the approbation of the apoſtles, and that baptiſm ſucceeded in the place of circumciſion; as a ſeal of the ſame covenant.

It is no objection to this argument, that the apoſtles, *in ſome inſtances*, complied with Jewiſh cuſtoms, for theſe compliances were only *occaſional*: But the obſervance of infant circumciſion among believing jews was *general* and *conſtant* for a *courſe* of years, probably for 30 years together, and this under the eye, and with the advice of all the apoſtles.

They recommended to the *Gentile* believers a charitable and pacific condeſcention to their jewiſh brethren in matters, which interfered not with the inſtitutions or doctrines of the goſpel, particularly, in an abſtinence from offenſive meats, and in the obſervance of favorite days. But they never required or adviſed the *Gentiles* to conform to the *Jews* in the obſervance of the Abrahamic rite of infant circumciſion, tho' this was a rite, of which the jewiſh chriſtians were as tenacious as of any other. The reaſon is obvious: The *Gentile* believers obſerved another rite inſtituted in its place, namely, *infant baptiſm*.

If under the chriſtian diſpenſation, infant circumciſion had been, *in itſelf*, wrong, it would not have been allowed to the *Jewiſh* believers. If it had been, under preſent circumſtances, an *indifferent* ceremony, like abſtinence from meats, ſhaving the head

read, and purification in the temple, it would, for peace ſake, have been recommended to the *Gentile* believers. But as another ordinance was by them uſed in its place, there would have been an impropriety in their adopting this, and therefore it was not required of them.

3. It is an undeniable fact, that *circumciſed* believers were *frequently*, if not *generally*, received to fellowſhip, in the chriſtian church, *without baptiſm*; for all churches have fellowſhip with the church in Jeruſalem, and Jewiſh and Gentile believers had communion in the ſame churches. That Chriſt's firſt diſciples were baptized, we have no evidence. That the *twelve* partook of the firſt ſupper, before chriſtian baptiſm was ſo much as inſtituted, is undeniable; for it is evident from Acts 19. 5. and the author of the letters himſelf concedes, that *John's* baptiſm was not *chriſtian* baptiſm. Now if circumciſion was, in the caſe of the diſciples, ſufficient for their admiſſion to the great goſpel-ordinance of the ſupper, then certainly it was a ſeal of the goſpel-covenant; and therefore the baptiſm of believers, already circumciſed, was a matter not of univerſal neceſſity, but only of particular expedience. It ſeems to have taken place chiefly in the caſe of the Jews, who after Chriſt's reſurrection, had for a time openly oppoſed the goſpel, and the ſuperior evidence which then attended it. Now

4. There was a manifeſt propriety in baptizing *ſome* who had been circumciſed, although baptiſm and circumciſion are ſuppoſed to be ſeals of the ſame covenant.

The long expected Meſſiah had now appeared; a clearer diſpenſation of the covenant of grace, attended

tended with larger promiſes and more liberal privileges, was now introduced; the way was opened for the admiſſion of all nations into the church of God; and baptiſm was inſtituted to be a ſeal of the covenant, and a badge of diſtinction between the church and the unbelieving world. Though circumciſion had been, and ſtill might be a mark of diſcrimination between the worſhippers of the true God and idolatrous heathens, yet, after the inſtitution of baptiſm, the former rite would not ſo clearly diſcriminate between chriſtians and unbelievers in general; for unbelieving Jews would ſtill uſe circumciſion. It was therefore proper, that the circumciſed Jew, when he embraced the goſpel, if he had before openly oppoſed it, ſhould ſubmit to baptiſm, to teſtify his belief that Jeſus of Nazareth, whom he had rejected, was the promiſed Meſſiah; that the doctrine preached by the apoſtles, in his name, was divine; and that the ancient diſtinction of Jew and Gentile, male and female, was aboliſhed, and all were to become one in Chriſt. Had *none* of the believing Jews been baptized, there might have remained too great an appearance of a diſtinction between *them* and *gentile* believers; a diſtinction which, after all, many of the Jewiſh chriſtians were ſtrongly inclined to preſerve, and which the apoſtles were no leſs ſolicitous to extinguiſh. It was Chriſt's deſign, that his church ſhould be, and *appear* to be one; that, while it was diſtinguiſhed from the world, it ſhould harmonize with itſelf, and keep a unity of ſpirit in the bond of peace.

Suppoſe a prince, who had appointed a particular uniform for his ſoldiers, ſhould think proper,

on

ı the introduction of a new diſcipline, and the quiſition of new ſubjects, to appoint for *theſe* a- ɔther uniform; might we not expect, that he ould allow, and in caſe of a rebellion raiſed on is occaſion, would require many of his *former* ſub- ɛts to adopt the ſame, that there might be no diſ- nction kept up between old ſubjects and new, but l might become one harmonious body? And ould any man, in this caſe, imagine that the new ɾery came not in the place of the old? Or that e one had not been, as the other was now, a ıdge and token of allegiance?—No more can e, on this ground, pretend, that baptiſm ſucceeds ɔt in the place of circumciſion.

It will perhaps be aſked; 'Why then ought not ıptiſm to be adminiſtered on the eighth day ac- ɾding to the law of circumciſion?'

We anſwer; It was not eſſential to the *validity* circumciſion, that it ſhould be adminiſtered on e eighth day. It was not to be delayed ɔyond that day without occaſion; nor ought we, ithout occaſion, to delay baptiſm. But where rcumſtances admitted not ſo early an application the ſeal, the delay was not faulty then, nor ould it be now. Circumciſion, indeed, might ɔt be performed earlier than the eighth day: ıt for this delay there were particular reaſons, not ɔplicable to baptiſm. One reaſon might be the nderneſs of the infant, and the weakneſs of the ıother, which would render an immediate opera- ɔn of this kind dangerous to both. But the prin- pal reaſon was the legal impurity of the mother ıd the conſequent impurity of the child for the ſt ſeven days. This reaſon is expreſsly aſſigned in the

the divine law ;* *If a woman have born a man child, ſhe ſhall be unclean ſeven days—and on the eighth day he ſhall be circumciſed.* But as the legal impurities have ceaſed under the goſpel, there is no ſuch reaſon for the delay of baptiſm.

Thus, I think, it undeniably appears, that baptiſm ſtands in the place of circumciſion, and that the arguments to the contrary, are futile and impertinent. And if it ſtands in the ſame place, it is certainly to be applied to the ſame ſubjects, the infants of God's people.—I proceed to another argument.

DISCOURSE III.

3. THE right of infants to baptiſm may be clearly inferred from the words of our Saviour, Mark 10. 14. compared with thoſe, John 3. 5. *Suffer little children to come to me—for of ſuch is the kingdom of God.*—And, *Except a man* (ean me tis, *except any one*) *be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

By *the kingdom of God* muſt be underſtood either the *Church*, God's viſible kingdom on earth; or *Heaven*, his inviſible kingdom above. Into the *former* we are admitted by baptiſm, which is the ſign of that ſpiritual renovation, by which we are prepared for the *latter*. Theſe *little children* are called

* Levit. 12. 1. 2.

called *infants*; they were *brought* to Chriſt; were *taken up in his arms*; doubtleſs therefore they were under the age of diſcretion. They who brought them were *believers*; otherwiſe they would not have ſought a *bleſſing* from Chriſt for them. The phraſe being *born of water*, ſignifies being *baptized:* So the author of the letters underſtands it, and numbers it among the paſſages that ſpeak of baptiſm.*

Now if, by the *kingdom of God*, we underſtand the *church*, then here is an expreſs declaration, that infants belong to the church, are Chriſt's diſciples and viſible members of his body: And conſequently have a right to *baptiſm*, the only inſtituted ſign of admiſſion into this kingdom. *Except any one be born of water, he cannot enter into this kingdom.* Hence the chriſtian *church* is ſaid to be *cleanſed by the waſhing of water.*† If by the *kingdom of God*, we underſtand the *inviſible kingdom* above, then here is a plain declaration, that infants belong to *that*, and conſequently may be *born of the ſpirit*; for *except one be born of the ſpirit, he cannot enter into that kingdom*, which fleſh and blood do not inherit. And if they may be *born of the ſpirit*, doubtleſs they may be *born of water*, or baptized. As the church is the *gate* of heaven, ſo baptiſm is the

* The author of the letters ſays, 'Chriſtian baptiſm was not yet inſtituted.' This is doubtleſs true: but John preached, ſaying, *The kingdom of God is at hand*; and he baptized with the baptiſm of repentance to prepare the people for this kingdom. It was therefore very ſeaſonable for Chriſt now to inſtruct *Nicodemus*, that baptiſm, or *being born of water*, was ſoon to be the rite of admiſſion into his kingdom. But whether we underſtand the phraſe, of *outward baptiſm*, or inward ſanctification, our argument from it will be equally concluſive.

† Eph. 5. 26.

the *ſign* of regeneration. And if they may be admitted into heaven *by regeneration*, they may be admitted into the church *by baptiſm*. If the *things ſignified* belong to them, the *ſign* and *token* muſt be ſuppoſed to belong to them. The Apoſtle *Peter** plainly teaches us, that they, to whom the promiſe of the ſpirit pertains, have a right to baptiſm, the ſign of the promiſe. In whatever ſenſe therefore we underſtand the *kingdom of God*, the concluſion is the ſame, That infants are ſubjects of baptiſm.

It cannot reaſonably be ſaid, that the words—*of ſuch*—intend only perſons of a childlike diſpoſition: For then how would this be a reaſon why little children ſhould be brought to Chriſt, and why he ſhould be diſpleaſed with his diſciples for endeavouring to hinder them? This makes our Lord's argument run thus. Suffer infants to be brought to me, for my kingdom conſiſteth *only* of adult perſons reſembling children in their diſpoſition. He elſewhere makes *Lambs* and *Doves* emblems of a chriſtian temper; and according to this interpretation, he might as well have ſaid, Suffer *Lambs* and *Doves* to come to me, for *of ſuch* is the kingdom of God; i. e. it conſiſts of perſons of a lamb-like and dove-like temper.

Well, 'but the chriſtian rite of baptiſm was not given to theſe children; they were bro't to Chriſt for his bleſſing and prayers, accompanied with impoſition of hands.' True: but our Saviour declares, that ſuch, i. e. the infants of believers, belong to this kingdom, into which none are admitted, but by being *born of water*; ſo that here is a plain declaration,

* Act. 2. 38.

declaration, that infants were to be introduced into his church by baptiſm. And by taking them into his arms, praying for them, and bleſſing them, he ſhewed that *ſuch* are capable ſubjects of the influence and bleſſing of the Spirit, which are the things repreſented in baptiſm. He did not pour water on them; but he performed a ceremony quite as ſacred and ſolemn, and thus ſhewed, that infants are meet ſubjects of that external rite, which denotes the conveyance of ſpiritual bleſſings; and ſuch a rite is the ordinance of baptiſm.

4. The baptiſmal commiſſion, Mat. 28. 19. gives a plain warrant for admitting infants to baptiſm. It runs thus. *Go, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt, teaching them to obſerve*, &c.

Some will ſay, '*Infants* are not expreſsly mentioned here.' True: neither are *Adults*. But Chriſt uſes the word, *nations*, which is a collective term, and muſt naturally be underſtood as including *both*. And had he intended to teach his Apoſtles, that perſons of every age muſt be admitted to baptiſm, he could not have choſen any ſingle word to expreſs it better. *Baptize all nations*. The chriſtian church is called a *nation*, a *people*, becauſe it conſiſts of perſons of every age.*

But it is objected; '*Teaching* is required previous to baptiſm, which infants are not capable of.'

Here let it be obſerved, that the word *Mathetyſate*, rendered *Teach*, is not the ſame which is *commonly* uſed for *teaching*, but of a more general ſignification. The proper import of it is, to *proſelyte*

* 1. Pet. 2. 9.

lyte or *make diſciples*. The commiſſion then is this. *Go, diſciple all nations, baptizing them—teaching them to obſerve all things*, &c. Here are two words in the commiſſion rendered, *Teaching*. The latter *didas kontes*, ſignifies to *indoctrinate*; the other is more general, and ſignifies to *make diſciples*, which may be done by introduction into a ſchool in order to future teaching.

Now if we can ſhew, that *Infants* are ever conſidered as *diſciples*—as *belonging to Chriſt*, then it will appear that they come within the commiſſion, *Diſciple all nations, baptizing them*. We are told Mat. 18. 5. That Jeſus having ſet a *little child* before him, ſaid, *Whoſoever ſhall receive one ſuch little child in* my name *receiveth me*. To receive one *in Chriſt's name*, is to receive him as being *Chriſt's diſciple* and as *belonging* to him. So the phraſe is explained, Mark 9. 41. *Whoſoever ſhall give you a cup of water* in my Name, *becauſe ye* belong to Chriſt. And Mat. 10. 42. *Whoſoever ſhall give to one of theſe little ones a cup of water only* in the name of a diſciple, *ſhall not loſe his reward*. It is plain here that *infants*, who are to be received *in Chriſt's name* may be *his diſciples* and *belong to him*, to his church and kingdom. Accordingly they who contended, that perſons under the goſpel ought to be circumciſed after the manner of *Moſes*, are ſaid to *tempt God to put a yoke on the necks of the* diſciples, Act. 15. 10. *Infants* were to be circumciſed after the manner of *Moſes*, and therefore are comprehended among the *diſciples*, on whom the yoke would be laid. The commiſſion then muſt reſpect infants as well as others. The Apoſtles had before been inſtructed to receive not only adults, but

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alſo little children in *Chriſt's name*, and as *his diſciples*. Now a particular *rite* is appointed, by which they ſhould receive or diſciple them in his name. *Diſciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, &c.*

But the author of the letters ſays, 'The diſciples of Chriſt, during his miniſtry on earth, as well as the diſciples of *John*, were well acquainted with the inſtitution of baptiſm, for they baptized great multitudes; but they adminiſtered a baptiſm in which infants had *no part*. When therefore our Lord inſtituted his ſacrament of baptiſm, if infants were to be received into it, it cannot be doubted but he *declared* this; otherwiſe men, who had been uſed to exclude infants, would not think of them as coming within this freſh commiſſion.'

He expreſsly allows, that the Apoſtles would be determined very much by former uſages, in judging whether infants came within this commiſſion. Whether the diſciples of *John* and of Chriſt had been wont to baptize infants, it is not expreſsly ſaid. And therefore to judge how the Apoſtles would underſtand their commiſſion, we muſt go farther back than to *John*'s miniſtry. Theſe Apoſtles were *Jews*. They had been educated in the *Jewiſh* religion. They knew, that from the days of *Abraham*, and all along through the *moſaic* diſpenſation, infants had been taken into covenant with their parents by the ſame initiating rite.—They knew, this had ever been eſteemed a great privilege; and they would naturally ſuppoſe, the privilege was ſtill to continue, as the *Abrahamic* covenant was yet in force. They knew it had been the conſtant immemorial practice of the *Jewiſh*

church, to receive *gentile* proſelytes and their infant children with them by baptiſm. This the ancient *Jewiſh* writers teſtify. Baptiſm, we know, was no new thing in *John*'s time. The *Jews* appear to have been well acquainted with it. They don't aſk him, What meaneſt thou by this *new* ceremony? *But why baptizeſt thou, if thou art not the Chriſt, nor Elias, nor that Prophet?* Their queſtion implies, that the *Prophets* had been wont to baptize, and they expected *Chriſt* and *Elias* would do the ſame. *John* probably took up baptiſm, as he found it practiſed in the *Jewiſh* church, where it had been conſtantly adminiſtered to the *infants* of *gentile* proſelytes. And it is not only without proof, but againſt probability, that this author aſſerts, 'Infants had no *part* in *John's* baptiſm.' Farther, theſe Apoſtles had been taught to look upon infants as *belonging to Chriſt*, and to treat them as *his diſciples*. They had heard Chriſt pronounce them ſubjects of his kingdom, and give directions, that they ſhould be brought to him. They had been reprimanded for attempting to hinder infants from being brought. They knew, that Chriſt came not to leſſen the privileges of the church, (of which the admiſſion of infants was one) but to enlarge them; and that *baptiſm* was now the *rite* of admiſſion into it. Under theſe circumſtances, how muſt they underſtand their commiſſion? Certainly, upon this author's principles, they muſt ſuppoſe it to include infants; for he allows, they would underſtand it according to former uſage. We may then retort his argument. When Chriſt inſtituted his ſacrament of baptiſm, if infants were *not* to be received to it, it cannot be doubted, but he

he ſufficiently *declared* this; otherwiſe men, who had always been uſed to ſee infants admitted into the church of God by the ſame token with their parents, would conſider them as coming within this freſh commiſſion, *Go, diſciple all nations, baptizing them.*

Beſides, When they ſaw the doors of the church now enlarged to admit *new* ſubjects, even *all* nations, they would not imagine, that the ſubjects, who had ever been admitted, were in future to be excluded. The commiſſion therefore muſt be underſtood as a virtual command to baptize infants.

5. Childrens right to baptiſm is very clearly taught, in thoſe words of *Peter* to the awakened *Jews*, Act. 2. 38. *Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jeſus Chriſt, for the remiſſion of ſins, and ye ſhall receive the gift of the Holy Ghoſt, for the promiſe is to you and to your children.* He does not ſay, The promiſe *is* to you, and *will be* to your children when they become believers; but it is to both, to you and the children which you *now* have: *And to all them that are afar off, as many as the Lord our God ſhall call*, i. e. wherever God ſends the goſpel to call the *Gentiles*, it carries this promiſe, which is in like manner to *them* and *their* children. The promiſe being made to *them*, is urged as a reaſon why *they* ſhould be baptized. And the ſame reaſon holds for the baptiſm of all to whom the promiſe belongs? and conſequently for the baptiſm of their *children*, for the promiſe is to *them*. *Be baptized—for the promiſe is to you and to your children.* The reaſon aſſigned for baptiſm is ſuch as equally takes place with reſpect to both. If the parents intereſt in the promiſe is a reaſon

why *he* ſhould be baptized, his childrens intereſt in it, is juſt as good a reaſon, why *they* ſhould be baptized. To ſuppoſe this promiſe is a juſt ground for the baptiſm of *believers*, but not for the baptiſm of *their children*, is to make the apoſtle talk thus abſurdly and incoherently. The promiſe is to you, therefore be ye baptized—and the ſame promiſe is equally to your children, yet they muſt *not* be baptized.

Well, but our brethren ſay, 'You and your children is nothing more than you and your poſterity,' or your children when they become adult.

But a little attention will convince us, this cannot be the meaning. This is contrary to the natural conſtruction of the words—*The promiſe is—to your children*; not *ſhall be to them*, when they become believers. The people, to whom theſe words were ſpoken, were *Jews* and *Proſelytes*, who had always been uſed to ſee infants comprehended with their parents in covenant tranſactions, and therefore would naturally ſuppoſe, their infants to be intended. To ſuppoſe that by *your children*, the Apoſtle meant only their adult deſcendants, is to make him ſpeak nonſenſe; for then he muſt be underſtood thus, 'The promiſe is to you and your children, but not as *your* children, or as being related to you, any more than if they were children of *Pagans*; but if they ſhould live to adult age, ſhould be called by the goſpel, and ſhould believe, then the promiſe *will be* to them, as it is *now* to you.'

Now why are children joined with their parents, as joint partakers of the ſame promiſe, if they derive no benefit from this relation, but are to ſtand upon preciſely the ſame footing with the children

of

of *heathens* and *infidels?* Farther; it ſhould be remembered, that the great promiſe of the *Abrahamic* covenant, which probably is here referred to, & called by way of eminence, THE PROMISE, viz. *I will be a God to you and your ſeed*; this promiſe, I ſay, did certainly belong to the infant children of *Abraham*, and of his *ſpiritual* ſeed; and the ſeal of this promiſe was expreſsly ordered to be applied to ſuch. But our brethren generally ſay, 'The promiſe here intended is the promiſe of the ſpirit, contained in the foregoing words, *Ye ſhall receive the gift of the Holy Ghoſt.*' Be it ſo. If then it appears that the promiſe of the Spirit is in fact made, not only to believers, but alſo to their children, even to infants; the reaſon will hold, why *they* ſhould be baptized. It is expreſsly promiſed, Iſai. 44. 3. *I will pour my Spirit upon thy ſeed, and my bleſſing upon thine offspring*; i. e. *thy little ones*, as the following words ſhew; *and they* (thine offspring) *ſhall* SPRING UP *as among the graſs and as willows by the water-courſes.* They ſhall grow up under the influences of my Spirit and bleſſings of my covenant, as graſs under the kindly ſmiles of heaven, and as willows by the fertile banks of rivers.

There can be no doubt with any one who believes the ſcriptures, but the divine Spirit often has great influence in forming the mind into a preparation for virtue and uſefulneſs, even in its infant ſtate. *John* was filled with the Holy Ghoſt from his mother's womb. *Iſaiah* was called and formed from the womb. *Jeremiah* was ſanctified from the womb. *Samuel* grew up before the Lord. I queſtion not but all, who are born and educated

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under the goſpel covenant, have, even in early childhood, ſome gentle excitations to virtue from the Spirit of grace, as a fruit of this promiſe to believers and their children. Now ſince the promiſe of the Spirit does in fact belong to little children, baptiſm, the ſign of the promiſe, belongs to them alſo. *Let them be baptized—for the promiſe is to them.* Note here; their receiving the Spirit was not a *condition*, but a *conſequence* of their baptiſm. *Be baptized* and ye ſhall receive, &c. So upon the *Samaritans* mentioned, Act. 8. the Spirit was poured out after they were baptized: So that children are to be baptized upon this general promiſe, even before they can, by a holy life, give evidence of their having actually received the Spirit. That in the goſpel-age, as well as in former diſpenſations, children ſhould be received into covenant together with, and upon the faith of their parents, is plainly foretold, Iſai. 65. 22. *They are the ſeed of the bleſſed of the Lord*, and their *offspring with them.* And chap. 49. 18. 22. *They* (the gentiles) *ſhall gather themſelves together, and come to thee—And they ſhall* bring *thy ſons in their* arms, *and thy daughters ſhall be* carried *on their* ſhoulders.

6. The accounts we have of ſome whole families being baptized, upon the faith of their reſpective heads, afford an argument of conſiderable weight, that the Apoſtles underſtood their commiſſion as extending to infants, and practiſed accordingly.

If infants were baptized, it is by no means probable, we ſhould be informed of their names or ages; we could expect only to be told in general, that ſuch perſons were baptized and their families: And ſo much we are told. Paul baptized the houſhold

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of *Stephanas*, 1. Cor. 1. 16. *Lydia*, when the Lord opened her heart to receive the word, was baptized and *her houſhold*, Act. 16. 15. The Jaylor, upon his believing was baptized, he and *all his*, ver. 33.

This *Lydia* was of the city of *Thyatira*; but ſhe now dwelt at *Philippi*; here ſhe had a houſe, in which ſhe lodged the Apoſtles for ſome time, and ſhe had a houſhold with her. Whether they were children or ſervants, or both, and what their exact ages were, it is not ſaid, nor is it material. The ſtory repreſents *them as* baptized upon *her faith*; and this is all that is to the purpoſe. It will be ſuggeſted perhaps, that they might be baptized upon *their own* faith. But the ſtory gives no intimation of any one's believing, but *Lydia*. Take the account as *Luke* has left it, and *they* were baptized upon *her* being judged faithful to the Lord.

The ſtory of the *Jaylor* is to the ſame purpoſe. He enquired of the Apoſtles, *what muſt I do to be ſaved?* They ſay, *Believe on the Lord, and thou ſhalt be ſaved and thine houſe.* In the ſame ſenſe, ſalvation is ſaid to come to the houſe of *Zaccheus*, becauſe *he* was a ſon of *Abraham*, i. e. a believer. So ſuch as are added to the church are called, *The ſaved.* There were doubtleſs ſome preſent on this occaſion beſides the *Jaylor's* family; and ſome of his family might be adults; and therefore it is ſaid, *They ſpake the word to him, and to all that were in his houſe.* It is added, *He was baptized*, He and all his *ſtraitway.* It is not ſaid, All that were *in his houſe* were baptized; but he and all his, i. e. ſuch as were at his diſpoſal—under his government —ſubject to his command. Theſe were properly

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his. No mention is yet made of any one's
ing, but the *Jaylor* himſelf. But do not t
words, *He rejoiced believing in God with all h*
import, that all his family believed as well
I think not. The greek words *egalliaſato*
pepiſteukos to theo are literally rendered th
rejoiced in all his houſe, having believed God.
idea conveyed is this: After he had believe
he rejoiced and gave thanks in the preſence,
behalf of his whole family.

Now as it had been the ancient univerſ
tice, to receive infants with their parents i
church of God, they who ſhould read theſe a
of houſholds baptized, would naturally co
that infants (if there were ſuch) were bapt
well as others. If a Miſſionary ſent from this c
where infant baptiſm is generally practiſed,
pelize the heathen, ſhould write back an acc
his ſucceſs; and therein ſhould ſay, he ha
tized ſo many hundreds, and amongſt the re
a noted perſon and his *houſhold*—ſuch an o
all his; who would doubt, but there wer
children, under the age of diſcretion, wh
meant to include? But if an Antipædobapt
ſionary ſhould publiſh an account of the ho
he had baptized, he would naturally except i
to prevent miſtakes.

7. The right of infants to baptiſm is farth
firmed by ſeveral particular paſſages o
ture.

It may be inferred from thoſe words of
poſtle. Rom. 11. 16. 17. *If the root be holy*
the branches. And if ſome of the branches (the
be broken off, and thou (a Gentile) *being a wil*

wert graffed in among them, and with them partakeſt of the root and fatneſs of the olive tree, boaſt not, &c.

The *olive-tree* is the church of God, built on the covenant made with *Abraham*. Of this tree the *Jews* were the *natural*; the *Gentiles*, the *ingraffed* branches. The *root* and *fatneſs* of the tree, are the privileges and bleſſings of the covenant. It was one privilege of the covenant, that children ſhould be admitted into the church with their parents and conſecrated to God as his children. Therefore if the *Gentiles* are *graffed* into the *ſame* ſtock, from which ſome of the *Jews* are *broken off*, and *with them* who remain, partake of the *root and fatneſs*, they certainly partake of this privilege of having their children graffed with them. Accordingly the *Gentiles* are declared to be *fellow-heirs* with the *Jews*—to be of the *ſame body*—to be *joint-partakers* of the promiſe. God promiſed, that he would be a God to *Abraham* and his ſeed. And is he a God of the *Jews* only? And not of the *Gentiles?* Doubtleſs of the *Gentiles* alſo. God appointed a token of this promiſe to be applied to *Abraham*'s infants, and to the infants of his ſeed: And if we ſtand in the ſame place as his natural ſeed, and are partakers with them of the ſame privileges, then the token of the promiſe is to be applied to our infants.

To this paſſage we may add that remarkable one, in 1 Cor. 7. 14. *The unbelieving huſband is ſanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is ſanctified by the huſband; elſe were your children unclean, but now are they holy.* It is plain here, that the children of *believers* are, in ſome ſenſe or other, *holy*,

or *ſaints*, by virtue of their parents faith. They are diſtinguiſhed from the children of *unbelievers*, who are called *unclean*, in the ſame manner as *chriſtians* are diſtinguiſhed from *heathens*. Now what is this infant-holineſs, which reſults from the parents' faith? It cannot be *legitimacy*, as ſome pretend; for ſurely the apoſtle did not mean to *baſtardize* all children born of heathen parents. It cannot be *real*, *inherent* holineſs; for in this ſenſe, *they are born, not of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God.* It can then be no other, than *relative* or *covenant* holineſs. The children of believers are holy, as all the people of Iſrael were holy, by a ſpecial covenant-relation to God. The chriſtian church is called a *holy nation* and *peculiar people*, in the ſame ſenſe. They are holy, as all the firſt born under the law are holy, by a ſolemn dedication to God in his temple. In alluſion to the dedication of the firſt-born infants, the chriſtian church is called, *The church of firſt-born perſons.* They are holy, as being *God's children, born to him* of his own covenant-people. Now if they are in this ſenſe holy, by what rite or ceremony are they declared ſo, but by the waſhing of baptiſm? *The church is cleanſed by the waſhing of water.* If they are holy as being *God's children*, and within *his covenant*, they are certainly entitled to the *mark* of his children and the *token* of his covenant, which is baptiſm.

The manner in which the author of the letters endeavours to evade theſe paſſages, ſhews that he felt himſelf embarraſſed with them. I am 'very willing, ſays he, that children ſhould be as holy as the moſt benevolent perſon can wiſh them. I have no inclination to lay a ſtain upon that innocent age.—

[redacted] about their baptiſm.' The gentleman doubtleſs knew how we argue from theſe texts to prove infant baptiſm. Why has he not ſhewn, that they muſt, or *may* be taken in ſome other ſenſe? Why has he not told us, how the branches are holy by the holineſs of the root: how children are holy by their parents faith, in ſome other ſenſe than as being intitled to the privileges and ſeal of the covenant? How the *Gentiles* can be partakers of the ſame promiſe, and of the ſame root and fatneſs with *Abraham's* natural ſeed, and yet not be admitted to the ſame privileges? The truth is, the argument from theſe texts is unanſwerable.* Again.

* To evade the argument from this paſſage, ſome have ſaid 'The ſame holineſs, which is aſcribed to the *children* of the believer is alſo aſcribed to the *unbelieving partner*, who is ſaid to be *ſanctified* as well as the offspring ſaid to be holy. Why then is not the unbelieving huſband, or wife, a member of the church by virtue of the faith of the correlate, as well as the children, by virtue of the faith of the parent?

In anſwer to this I would obſerve; Infants, under the Old Teſtament, had ever been received as members of God's church. But when the Jews, in the time of Ezra, had, contrary to an expreſs law married ſtrange wives, by whom children were born to them, it was ordered that theſe children, with their heathen parents, ſhould be put away, as unclean; and the men, who refuſed to put away their ſtrange wives, were themſelves to be ſeparated from the congregation.

In the Corinthian church a doubt had ariſen, whether a believer might continue with an unbelieving correlate. This queſtion the apoſtle anſwers in the affirmative. For though he adviſes chriſtians to marry only in the Lord, yet a marriage, contracted when both the parties were unbelievers, is not diſſolved by the ſubſequent faith of one of them. But it might farther be enquired, whether children born of parents, of whom one was a heathen, ought not to be excluded from the church with the unclean or heathen parent, as had been determined in the time of Ezra? To this the apoſtle anſwers in the negative. *If a brother have a wife who believeth not, and ſhe be pleaſed to dwell with him, let him not put her away*, and ſo of the wife who hath an unbelieving huſband. *For the unbelieving huſband is*, or hath been, *ſanctified by the wife*; or rather, *ſanctified in*, or *to the wife*; and

t[illegible]

Again. The Apoſtle, in the 4th chap. [illegible] tells us, that *Iſaac* was *born after the Spirit*, and *born by promiſe*. By this he illuſtrates the goſpel covenant; and ſays, *As Iſaac was, ſo are we the children*

the unbelieving wife hath been ſanctified in, or *to the huſband*. The unbelieving is ſanctified in reſpect of, and in relation to the believing party, ſo that the latter has a lawful uſe and enjoyment of the former for as the apoſtle ſays elſewhere, *to the pure all things are pure; and every creature of God is good, for it is ſanctified by the word of God and prayer.—Elſe were your children unclean*. If the unbelieving partner were not ſanctified to the uſe of the believer, both the parents muſt be rejected from the church, the former as a heathen and unclean the latter as criminally living in cohabitation with a heathen; as, in the time of Ezra, thoſe who refuſed to put away the ſtrange wives whom they had unlawfully taken, were to be ſeparated from the congregation. Conſequently the children would be unclean, becauſe both the parents would be ſo. But ſince the unbeliever is ſanctified in relation to the believer, the children are *holy*, and ſo to be accounted members of the church.

The unbeliever is here ſaid to be ſanctified, not in relation to God but only in relation to his, or her yokefellow. But the children are ſaid to be *holy*, in oppoſition to the *unclean*, or to *heathen*. A perſon's being ſanctified in a particular reſpect, or for a certain purpoſe, as the unbeliever is here ſaid to be ſanctified only in relation to the huſband, or the wife, does not denominate him a *holy one*, which is, in ſcripture, the appropriate title of thoſe who belong to the church Therefore, though children are members of the church, as deſcended from, and under the care and government of a believing parent, yet a heathen becomes not a member of the church by marriage with a believer. The words of the apoſtle can convey no ſuch idea. For he calls children *holy* in oppoſition to the *unclean*; but he expreſsly defines and limits the ſenſe, in which the unbeliever is ſanctified It is merely in reſpect of, and in relation to the believing correlate.

The ſenſe which we have given of the phraſe, *ſanctified by*, or *to the wife*, is approved by critical expoſitors, particularly by *Whitby*, who ſays, it is the ſenſe given by the *Greek interpreters*; and it is certainly agreeable to the phraſe in the original. The apoſtle cannot intend, that the unbeliever is *converted to the faith* by the believer; for this ſanctification is ſomething which has *already* taken place, while the ſubject was an unbeliever. The converſion of the unbeliever by the influence of the believing correlate, the apoſtle afterward mentions, as an additional reaſon for cohabitation; but he ſpeaks of it as a change which *hopefully may*, not as what *already has*, or *certainly will* take place. *What knoweſt thou, O wife, whether thou ſhalt ſave thy huſband? And how knoweſt thou, O man, whether thou ſhalt ſave thy wife?*

children of the promiſe: i. e. we are *born* children of the promiſe, as being born of covenanted parents. Accordingly the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews* ſpeaks of the privileges of the covenant, as being the *birth-right* of chriſtians, and cautions them, that they do not profanely ſell *their* birth-right, as *Eſau* did *his*.

And it is worthy to be noted, that the ſame titles, by which *chriſtians* are diſtinguiſhed from *heathens*, are expreſsly applied to the *children* of converted parents. Are chriſtians called *ſaints?* So are their children.* Are they called *diſciples?* So are their children.† Do they belong to God's kingdom? So do their children.‡ Are they called *believers?* So chriſtian families, which were ſupported by a common ſtock, in which infants were included, are called *the multitude of them that believe.*§ And Chriſt ſpeaks of thoſe *little ones* which *believe in him.*‖ Are chriſtians called the *children of God?* So are the infants of profeſſors.¶ They that belong to the church are called *the ſaved*; ſo ſalvation comes to the *houſe* of the believer.†† Who, that conſiders, how theſe titles are promiſcuouſly given to *adult* chriſtians and *their* children, can doubt, but that children are brought into covenant with their parents in the goſpel-time, as they uſed to be before, and conſequently are ſubjects of baptiſm, the only initiating ſeal?

8. I ſhall add to the preceding arguments, one more taken from 1 Cor. 10. 2. The Apoſtle here, ſpeaking of the *Jews* who came out of *Egypt*, ſays, *They were all baptized unto Moſes in the cloud and in the ſea.*

* 1 Cor. 7. 14. † Act. 15. 10. ‡ Mark 10. 14.
§ Act. 4. 32. ‖ Mat. 18. 6. ¶ Ezek. 16. 21.
†† Luke 19. 9.

That this paſſage alludes to chriſtian baptiſm, our brethren, particularly the author of the letters, allow. The Apoſtle plainly conſiders *their* baptiſm into *Moſes* as typical of *our* baptiſm into *Chriſt*; for he adds, *They did all drink of the ſame ſpiritual drink; for they drank of the rock, which followed them, and that rock is Chriſt* or a type of Chriſt.—*All theſe things happened to them for examples*, or types, *and are written for our admonition.* The *Jewiſh* writers ſay, 'The people were baptized in the deſart and admitted into covenant with God before the law was given.' Now if the Apoſtle has any reſpect to chriſtian baptiſm, as it is plain he has, here is an undeniable proof of the right of infants to baptiſm. For he ſays, *They all*, the *whole* congregation, of which *infants* then in their parents arms were a great part, *they all were baptized into Moſes.* All *were under the cloud.* All *paſſed through the ſea*, &c. He repeats the univerſal term *all* becauſe it is *emphatical* here. Now if this baptiſm into Moſes, was a type and written for our admonition, it typically admoniſhes us, that we *all* ſhould be baptized into Chriſt, not *believers only*, but their *children* alſo.

As the whole congregation were baptized and admitted into covenant at the ſea, when *Moſes* took the command of them, ſo this covenant was again renewed with *all*, both men, women and *little ones*, juſt before he left them. Deut. 29. 10. *Ye ſtand, all of you before the Lord your God*, your Elders, your little ones, your wives, *that thou ſhouldeſt enter into covenant with the Lord, that he may eſtabliſh thee for a people unto himſelf, and may be unto thee a God, as he hath ſworn to thy Father, to Abraham*, &c.

This

This covenant with *Abraham*, which is ſo expreſsly renewed with *little ones*, is deſcended to us and our children.

I ſhall now briefly recapitulate the arguments that have been offered, and preſent them in one view.

The covenant, which God made with *Abraham* and his ſeed, expreſsly included *infants*; and the ſeal thereof was, by God's command, applied to *them*. We, believing *Gentiles*, are the ſeed for whom the covenant with *Abraham* was made; and therefore *our* infants as well as *his*, are entitled to the privileges of the covenant, and ſubjects of the ſeal of it, by virtue of the original grant to *Abraham*, in as much as that grant has never been recalled. This covenant was renewed at the *red ſea*—and again in the plains of *Moab*, and ſtill infants are expreſsly included.—All along under the Old Teſtament, children are comprehended with parents in all covenant-tranſactions between God and his people, and the token of the covenant is ſtill applied to them. The Prophets often foretell, that the caſe would be the ſame in the goſpel time; that Chriſt ſhould gather the *lambs* with his arms—that God would pour his Spirit upon the *offspring* of his people, who ſhould be the ſeed of the bleſſed of the Lord, & their *offspring with them*. In the *Jewiſh* church, it was a cuſtom, long before our Saviour's appearance, to receive *gentile* proſelytes *with their children*, by baptiſm as well as circumciſion. Chriſt alſo himſelf took infants into his arms and bleſſed them, and directed that they ſhould be brought to him, becauſe of ſuch was his kingdom, that kingdom, into which perſons were to be admitted by being born of water. He ordered his Apoſtles to

receive

receive them in his name, and treat them as his diſciples. When he gave the baptiſmal commiſſion, he expreſſed it in ſuch univerſal terms, as muſt naturally include infants: And the Apoſtles, knowing what had been the conſtant uſage concerning infants, and how Chriſt had ever treated them, muſt underſtand the commiſſion as extending to ſuch. Accordingly, ſoon after, when they invited the convicted *Jews* to baptiſm, they placed their right to it upon the foot of a promiſe, which equally belonged to them and their children. When they baptized the head of any family in his own houſe, they baptized his family with him. They conſtantly taught, that the covenant with *Abraham*, of which circumciſion was the ſeal, is the ſame which we are now under, and that the bleſſings of it are come upon us *Gentiles*—that the *Gentiles* are graffed into the ſame ſtock, from which the *Jews* were broken off—that children are holy by virtue of their parents faith—that baptiſm is the chriſtian circumciſion, and therefore they who are baptized into Chriſt, are freed from the literal circumciſion, and all other ancient rites—that circumciſion, as a ſeal of the *Abrahamic* covenant, was a great privilege; but the goſpel-diſpenſation confers greater—They illuſtrate the goſpel-covenant by ancient examples of covenant-tranſactions, in which infants were included; by the caſe of *Iſaac*, who was *born* after the promiſe, by *Noah*'s ark, in which his whole family were ſaved in conſequence of *his* faith, the like figure whereunto even baptiſm now ſaves us; and by the baptiſm of the *whole* congregation, infants and all, at the red ſea, which was a type, and written for our admonition. When we conſider theſe things,

we

think the evidence abundantly clear, that the infants of believers are entitled to baptiſm.

DISCOURSE IV.

HAVING laid before you the arguments by which the right of infants to baptiſm is vindicated, I ſhall now, as I propoſed,

III. Shew you the rational ends and moral uſes of infant baptiſm.

If baptiſm be a divine inſtitution for the infants of believers, it ought to be applied to them, whether we can ſee the uſes of it or not: But ſtill it may give us ſome ſatisfaction to underſtand what good ends it can anſwer.

We are often aſked, 'What good can baptiſm do to *infants?*' It might ſuffice to reply, As much good as circumciſion could do to them formerly; or as much as the public preſentation of firſt-born infants to God could do *them*. The Apoſtle ſays, The profit of *circumciſion*, (which was uſually adminiſtered to infants) was much every way. The profit of *infant baptiſm* may be as much.—Particularly,

I. It is evident, that God treats infants as ſinners for *Adam*'s tranſgreſſion. In conſequence of *his* apoſtacy, *they* ſuffer a ſad variety of pains and diſeaſes, which often iſſue in early death. And from that bias and inclination to evil, which they ſoon diſcover

cover, there is reaſon to ſuppoſe, they are infected with ſome moral diſorder, which [illegible] to be removed in order to their entrance into the world of glory. *By one man*, ſays the Apoſtle, *ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin, and ſo death paſſes upon all men, for that all have ſinned.—By one man's offence, judgment came upon all to condemnation.—In Adam all die.—By his offence many are made ſinners.* In this language, he ſpeaks in the 5th chap. to the Romans.

Now the goſpel aſſures us, that Chriſt has obtained redemption from the condemnation of ſin, and that in this redemption, all who believe, are unfailingly intereſted. But we ſee, that a very great part of the human race are cut off in infancy, while they are incapable of actual faith. What becomes of *them*? Is any proviſion made for *their* ſalvation? Or muſt *they* periſh and be loſt for ever? This is a natural enquiry. Now to comfort our minds concerning *ſuch*, God has ſeen fit to aſſure us, that they may become partakers of redemption by Chriſt, and be made heirs of the kingdom above, notwithſtanding their incapacity for an *actual* compliance with thoſe terms which are propoſed to the adult. And to confirm our faith & hope in his promiſe, he has appointed, that they ſhall be received with their believing parents into his viſible kingdom, the church, and have the ſeal of his covenant affixed to them.

The great promiſe of the covenant is, that God will be a God to believers and *their* ſeed. This promiſe is often explained in ſcripture to import the happineſs of the life to come. And God's appointing the ſeal of this promiſe to be applied to our infant

ıfant ſeed, is a moſt comfortable ground of our aith and hope, that if they ſhould be removed y an early death, they will be tranſplanted into hat happy clime, where they will ſpring up in ev-rlaſting life.*

God is ſaid to have eſtabliſhed his covenant with he cattle and the fowls, when he engaged no nore to drown the earth, with a flood; and as a oken of this covenant, he appointed his bow in the cloud.

* The children of believing parents may be ſaid to be *born in covenant*, as they are born under that promiſe of the covenant, *I will be a God to thee and to thy ſeed.* Accordingly God calls them HIS children, born to HIM. To thoſe who die in infancy this promiſe may be underſtood as importing a reſurrection to eternal life. As the Apoſtle argues concerning the patriarchs, (Heb. 11.) ſo we may reaſon concerning theſe; ſince they enjoy no diſtinguiſhing favor in this world, there muſt be ſome good reſerved for them in another; elſe the promiſe fails. *Therefore God is not aſhamed to be called* Their God, *for he hath prepared for them a city.* To thoſe who arrive to moral agency, the promiſe may import, not only the enjoyment of the external means of religion, but the attendant influences of the divine ſpirit. The Apoſtle tells us, that among the many advantages of circumciſion, this is one of the chief, *that to them are committed the oracles of God.* (Rom. 3. 1.) And God expreſsly promiſes to Jacob his ſervant, and to Iſrael whom he has choſen, *I will pour my ſpirit on thy ſeed, and my bleſſing on thine offspring, and they ſhall ſpring up as among the graſs, and as willows by the watercourſes.* (Iſai. 44. 3.) Their intereſt in this promiſe, as the children of God's ſervants, is one ground of their admiſſion to baptiſm, the token of God's faithfulneſs, and of their obligation to ſerve him. But then it is by baptiſm, that they are *declared* to be within the church, and entitled to the *viſible* privileges of it. Perſons may be *virtually* in covenant by *their own*, or their *parents* faith; but they are not *viſibly* and *profeſſedly* in covenant, or in the church, till they have paſſed under the appointed ceremony. When we ſpeak of perſons being admitted into the church by baptiſm, we mean not, that this conveys the right of admiſſion; for it preſuppoſes the *right*, and the *qualification* or *relation*, in which the right, by divine inſtitution, is founded: but that it *declares* the right, and thus introduces to *viſible* privileges. God ſays, 'The uncircumciſed man-child ſhall be cut off from among his people, he hath broken my covenant.' He was previouſly in covenant; elſe he could not be ſaid to break it by his uncircumciſion. So alſo the unbaptized perſon is to be cut off, or excluded from the privileges of the chriſtian church.

cloud. And ſurely he may, in as juſt and rational a ſenſe, eſtabliſh the covenant of grace with infants, engaging to pour his ſpirit and bleſſing upon them, and appointing the ſeal of this covenant to be affixed to them, in token of his faithfulneſs to fulfil his gracious promiſe.

2. The parent, by dedicating his children to God in baptiſm, ſolemnly binds himſelf to give them a religious and chriſtian education, and to uſe his influence, that they ſhall keep the way of the Lord, and not put themſelves out of that covenant, into which they have been thus viſibly introduced. Now if it is any privilege for children to have a religious education, it is a privilege that ſuch an education ſhould be *ſecured* to them; and conſequently a privilege that the parent, by this public tranſaction, ſhould *covenant* and *engage* to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

It may be aſked perhaps, How a parent can covenant for his children? But the anſwer is obvious. He can covenant for *himſelf* to diſcharge ſuch and ſuch duties to them, and can commend them to God, in hope of the divine bleſſing upon his pious endeavours. In this ſenſe may every religious parent, as Joſhua did, covenant for his houſe, *As for me and my houſe we will ſerve the Lord.*

3. As the parent, who dedicates his children, ſhould conſider himſelf bound, by his own act to educate them religiouſly; ſo children thus dedicated, when they come to the age of reflection, ſhould realize, that, having been given to God, they are not *their own*, but *his*; and are bound to live, not to *themſelves*, but to *him* whoſe they are; and that a wicked

wicked, irreligious life is a practical renunciation their baptiſm, and diſavowal of their relation the God of their Fathers.

If the *Jewiſh* parent, by circumciſing his children, ound them to own and ſerve the God of *Iſrael.* -If the vow of *Sampſon's* parents bound *him* to be *Nazarite* forever—If *Hannah's* vow bound *Sam-l* to attend upon God in the ſanctuary; as well ay the act of the *chriſtian* parent, in bringing his ildren to baptiſm, bind them to ſerve the God d Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. The reli-ous parent may urge his children to a godly life this argument, that he has given them to God. hus the mother of king *Lemuel* expoſtulates with m.* *What my ſon? And what the ſon of my omb? And what the ſon of my* vows? And this gument will have weight with children of an in-nuous temper. Thus the Pſalmiſt reaſons with mſelf.† *I will walk before the Lord. I will call his name. I will pay my vows in the preſence of s people. O Lord, truly I am thy ſervant, I am y ſervant*, the ſon of thy handmaid.——I paſs on,

IV. To conſider the practice of the chriſtian urch with reſpect to infants immediately after the *poſtolic* age.

The author of the letters ſay, 'It is of ſmall im-rtance to chriſtians, to know what the many wri-rs upon this ſubject, ſince the time of the Evan-eliſts and Apoſtles, have affirmed.' But yet to now what they have affirmed concerning the *mode* f baptiſm, he thinks to be of no ſmall importance. He aſſerts, upon their authority, that the church r 1300 years practiſed *immerſion*; though indeed

* Prov. 31. 2. † Pſal. 11. 6.

he allows, that *ſprinkling* was practiſed too in extraordinary caſes. Upon the ſame authority it may be aſſerted, that the church, for many hundreds of years, practiſed *infant baptiſm*; and not a *ſingle* perſon, much leſs a church, can be produced which denied the *lawfulneſs* of it. And the practice of the church is as good an evidence in favour of *infant baptiſm*, as it would have been in favour of *immerſion*, in caſe that *alone* had been practiſed.—This gentleman himſelf (perhaps inadvertently) allows the early, conſtant, univerſal practice of admitting infants to baptiſm. For he adopts this paſſage from Dr. *Wall*, '*All* chriſtians in the world, who never owned the Pope's authority, do now, and *ever did*, dip their *infants* in the *ordinary* uſe.' (Not univerſally, but *ordinarily* dipt them.) If they *dipt* infants, they *baptized* them. This practice is of much more weight to prove *infants* are the *ſubjects*, than to prove *dipping* is the *mode* of baptiſm; becauſe dipping was but the *ordinary* uſe, whereas infant-baptiſm, for ought that appears, was the *univerſal* practice of the ancient church, except in caſes of *proſelytiſm*.

We do not pretend to reſt the proof of infants right to baptiſm upon the practice of the church, but upon the authority of ſcripture. However, if it appears, that the church, ſoon after the Apoſtles, did admit them, and there is no account of any church that rejected them, or any perſon who denied the *lawfulneſs* of the practice, or pretended, that it was an *innovation*, this will be an argument of conſiderable weight, that it was derived from the Apoſtles: For the early chriſtians, they who lived in the ages next after the Apoſtles, muſt have known,

known, what *their* practice was in ſuch a matter as this, which was of a moſt public nature, and concerned the very being of the church. What the uſage of the church was, in the earlieſt times after the Apoſtles, we can learn only from the ancient writers, who are here produced, not as *examples*, but only as *hiſtorians*, or witneſſes to a plain matter of fact.

Juſtin Martyr, who wrote about 40 years after the apoſtolic age, ſays, 'We have not received the carnal, but the ſpiritual circumciſion by baptiſm—And it is enjoined to all perſons to receive it in the ſame way.' Here he plainly conſiders baptiſm as ſucceeding in the place of circumciſion, and conſequently as being deſigned for infants as *that* was; which opinion he could not eaſily have fallen into, if the Apoſtles had univerſally, both in doctrine and practice, rejected infants. In one of his apologies for the chriſtians, he ſays, 'Several perſons among us, of 60 and 70 years old, who were *made diſciples to Chriſt from their childhood*, do continue uncorrupt.' *Made diſciples.* He uſes the ſame word which is uſed in the commiſſion; *Diſciple all nations baptizing them.* If they were *made diſciples*, they were doubtleſs baptized.

Irenæus, who wrote about 67 years after the Apoſtles, and was born it is ſaid, before the death of St. *John*, and was acquainted with *Polycarp*, who was *John's* diſciple, ſays concerning Chriſt, 'He came to ſave all perſons by himſelf, who by him are regenerated (i. e. *baptized*) unto God, infants, little ones, youths and elderly perſons.' That *Irenæus* uſed the word *regenerated* to ſignify *baptized*, is plain from his own words, where he ſays, 'When

Chriſt

Chriſt gave his diſciples the command of *regenerating* unto God, he ſaid, Go and teach all nations, *baptizing* them, &c.'

Tertullian, who flouriſhed about 100 years after the Apoſtles, gives a plain teſtimony, that the church admitted infants to baptiſm in his time. It is true he adviſes to *delay* their baptiſm; not becauſe it was *unlawful*, for he allows of it in caſes of neceſſity? not merely upon the foot of their *infancy*, for he adviſes alſo, that *unmarried* perſons be kept from this ordinance, until they either marry or are confirmed in continence; but becauſe the *Sponſors* were often brought into a ſnare; and becauſe, he imagined, ſins committed *after baptiſm* were next to unpardonable. But his adviſing to delay it, ſuppoſes it to have been the practice; for otherwiſe there would have been no room for the advice. He does not ſpeak of it as an *innovation*, which certainly he would have done, had it *begun* to be practiſed in his time. His words rather imply the contrary. His ſpeaking of *Sponſors*, who engaged for the education of the infants that were baptized, ſhews that there had been ſuch a cuſtom. And his aſking, Why that innocent age *made ſuch haſte* to baptiſm, ſuppoſes that infants had uſually been baptized ſoon after their birth. So that he fully enough witneſſes to the *fact*, that it had been the practice of the church to baptize infants. And his advice, to delay their baptiſm till they were grown up and married, was one of thoſe odd and ſingular notions, for which this Father was very remarkable.

Origen, who was contemporary with *Tertullian*, expreſsly declares infant-baptiſm to have been the conſtant

conſtant uſage of the church from the Apoſtles. He ſays, 'The baptiſm of the church is given for the forgiveneſs of ſins: But why are infants, *by the uſage of the church*, baptized, if there is nothing in them that needs forgiveneſs?'

Further he ſays, 'Infants are baptized for the remiſſion of ſins; for none is free from pollution, though his life be but the length of one day upon earth. And it is for that reaſon, becauſe by baptiſm the pollution of our birth is taken away, that *infants* are baptized.'

Again he obſerves, 'The church had from the Apoſtles an order to give baptiſm to infants; for they, to whom the divine myſteries were committed, knew that there was in all perſons the natural pollution of ſin, which muſt be done away by water and the Spirit.'

Now as *Origen*, in theſe paſſages, argues from infant-baptiſm to prove original ſin, we may conclude, it was an uncontroverted uſage of the church; for otherwiſe he could not, with propriety, have uſed it as an argument to eſtabliſh another point.

Cyprian, who wrote about 150 years after the Apoſtles, gives a fuller teſtimony to this fact. In this time a queſtion was ſtarted by one *Fidus*, (not whether infants might be baptized, but) whether baptiſm ought not to be given them on the eighth day, according to the law of circumciſion? This queſtion was propoſed to a council of 66 Biſhops convened at *Carthage*, who unanimouſly reſolved, that the baptiſm of infants ought not to be deferred to the eighth day, but might be given them at any time before. And a large letter to this purpoſe,

containing the reaſons of the reſolve, was written and deſigned by *Cyprian*, in the name of the council.

Now in this aſſembly of Miniſters, doubtleſs there were ſome 60 or 70 years old, who could remember within leſs than 100 years of the Apoſtles. And therefore, if infant-baptiſm had been a uſage lately introduced, *ſome* or *all* of them muſt have known it.—And if ſo, it is very ſtrange that not one of them intimated any ſcruple about it. Whether infants ſhould be baptized, ſeems not to have been at all a queſtion, but only whether their baptiſm needed to be deferred to the 8th day, which, without heſitancy, was determined in the negative.

A little more than 100 years after this time, *Gregory Nazianzen* taught, 'that infants ſhould be baptized to conſecrate them to Chriſt in their infancy.' *Ambroſe*, 'that the baptiſm of infants had been the practice of the Apoſtles and of the church till that time.' *Cryſoſtom*, 'that *baptiſm* had no determinate time, as circumciſion had, but one in the beginning of life, or one in the middle of it, or one in old age might receive it.'

But not to multiply citations; I ſhall add but one more, *Auſtin*, about 300 years after the Apoſtles, had a controverſy with *Pelagius* about original ſin; and to prove it, he frequently urges infant-baptiſm, demanding, Why infants are baptized for the remiſſion of ſins, if they have none? *Pelagius* though greatly puzzled with the argument, yet never pretends, that infant-baptiſm was an unſcriptural *innovation*, or a *partial* uſage in the church; which, had it been true, a man of his very extenſive

acquaintance

acquaintance with the world, muſt have known; and had he known it, he doubtleſs would have ſaid it, when he found himſelf embarraſſed with the argument. But far from intimating any ſuch thing, when ſome charged upon him the denial of infant-baptiſm, as a conſequence of his opinion, he diſavows the conſequence and complains, that *he had been ſlanderouſly repreſented as denying baptiſm to infants*. He aſks, 'Who can be ſo impious as to hinder infants from being baptized and born again in Chriſt?' And citing thoſe words, *Except one be born of water and the ſpirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*, he ſays, 'Who can be ſo impious as to refuſe to an infant, of whatever age, the common redemption of mankind?' And many other expreſſions he uſes, which plainly ſuppoſe, that infant-baptiſm had been practiſed univerſally, and time out of mind.

And from this time, till the year 1522, (as Dr. *Wall*, upon a moſt careful enquiry, aſſures us) there is not ſo much as a man to be found, who has ſpoken againſt, or even pleaded for the delay of the baptiſm of infants, except a ſmall number in *France*, in the 12th century, who denied the poſſibility of their ſalvation, and conſequently their right to baptiſm. But this ſect ſoon diſappeared.

Now if all the firſt churches were every where eſtabliſhed by the Apoſtles, upon the plan only of adult baptiſm, and children were every where left unbaptized, how could infant-baptiſm begin ſo early, and ſpread ſo extenſively as it ſeems to have done? How could ſuch a ſpeedy and total alteration take place in a matter of ſuch public notice and great importance, and yet no noiſe be made about

it; no oppoſition raiſed againſt it? Such a thing would be abſurd to imagine. The early and univerſal uſage of the church is then an argument of very conſiderable weight, that infant-baptiſm was an Apoſtolic practice.

To invalidate this argument our brethren alledge, that many corruptions were early admitted into the chriſtian church under pretence of *Apoſtolic* traditions, and prevailed without oppoſition; ſuch as *Infants Communion*, *Exorciſm*, *Trine-Immerſion*, *Unction after baptiſm*, &c. But ſuppoſing *theſe* had prevailed as early and univerſally, as we find *infant baptiſm* to have done (which truly was not the caſe) yet there is this mighty difference. *Theſe* were but circumſtantial errors, which did not deſtroy the being of the church, or nullify men's chriſtianity, and therefore it is no wonder, that we have no account of any warm controverſy about them. But *infant baptiſm*, in the opinion of our brethren, does, ſo far as it prevails, unchurch the church of Chriſt: For they look upon thoſe, who have received no other baptiſm, as being unbaptized, and unfit for chriſtian communion. Now if the firſt chriſtians had viewed it in this light, would they have ſat ſilent, when they ſaw it get footing, and prevail? Would not ſome, alarmed at the dangerous innovation, have born their teſtimony againſt it? Would there not have been ſome churches, which preſerved the primitive uſage, and renounced communion with ſuch as had ſo eſſentially departed from it? The different ſects of chriſtians were often inflamed againſt each other by ſmaller differences. It is therefore utterly unaccountable, that there ſhould be no diſpute, when this ſuppoſed *fundamental* innovation

novation was introduced, nor the leaſt remains of any controverſy about it, until within theſe two or three centuries.

There were indeed ſome great corruptions introduced into the church, which in time conſiderably prevailed, ſuch as *Image-worſhip*, *Tranſubſtantiation*, &c. But *theſe* never prevailed ſo *univerſally*, ſo *early*, nor ſo *without oppoſition*, as we have ſeen *infant baptiſm* muſt have done. A great part of the chriſtian church has *always* rejected them and proteſted againſt them. Many Synods and Councils have publicly condemned them. And in the times when, and places where they moſt prevailed, it was by the protection and ſupport of civil and military power; which cannot be pretended in the caſe of infant baptiſm.

It is time that we draw to a concluſion. I have only to lay before you a few deductions from what has been offered.

It has, I think, been proved, that *our* baptiſm is one with that of our *brethren*, and that we have neither changed the baptiſm inſtituted by Chriſt into another *rite*, nor introduced a *new* ſet of *ſubjects*. And therefore,

1. I beg leave ſeriouſly to enquire, Whether our brethren have any juſt occaſion to withdraw themſelves from our communion? Surely the candid among them will acknowledge, that our opinion is not ſo wholly without foundation, but that it may conſiſt with an honeſt and good heart. And can it be for the intereſt of chriſtianity, which we on both ſides profeſs to regard, that we ſhould renounce fellowſhip with each other on account of this difference? We are willing they ſhould commune

mune with us, and yet enjoy the liberty of acting agreeably to their own principles. Though we wiſh they might think with us, yet we would by no means conſtrain them to bring their infants to baptiſm contrary to their conſciences. And, I apprehend, few miniſters would ſcruple to adminiſter baptiſm by immerſion to any ſuitably qualified, who chuſe ſo to receive it. For though they think affuſion warranted by ſcripture, yet they are far from denying the validity of immerſion. Since therefore our brethren may enjoy their own principles with us, what occaſion can they have to ſeparate from us?

Perhaps ſome will ſay, We cannot commune with you, becauſe, in our opinion, you are unbaptized; nor can we receive baptiſm from your miniſters, becauſe *they* have received no other than infant baptiſm, which is a nullity; And ſince they have not been regularly baptized themſelves, they cannot adminiſter valid baptiſm to others.

It were to be wiſhed, that perſons of ſuch narrow ſentiments would realize the conſequence. Infant baptiſm was undoubtedly the univerſal practice of the chriſtian church for many hundreds of years together. Hiſtory does not inform us, when it firſt began to be practiſed; but we have particular accounts when it was firſt oppoſed. And if it be a nullity, there is not, nor can be again, any regular baptiſm in the world; for there is not the leaſt ground to pretend to a ſucceſſion of adult baptiſm. If we trace adult baptiſms back, we muſt come to the time when they were adminiſtered by thoſe who were baptized in infancy, and who, upon the principles above mentioned, could

not

not adminiſter valid baptiſm. Our brethren therefore, by nullifying *our* baptiſm, nullify *their own*; and by unchurching *us*, unchurch *themſelves*. Yea, upon theſe principles, there were no authorized miniſters, nor regular churches, nor baptized chriſtians, for many centuries together, nor are there now, nor ever will be again, without a new commiſſion from heaven. How then has Chriſt fulfilled his promiſes, that he will be with his miniſters always to the end of the world, and that the gates of hell ſhall not prevail againſt his church? We may reſt aſſured, that theſe promiſes have not been forgotten, and conſequently, that baptiſm did not ceaſe, nor the church fail, when infant baptiſm became ſo much the general practice, that a ſucceſſion of adult baptiſms was no where preſerved. Our brethren then muſt allow, that baptiſm, as adminiſtered in our churches, is valid, and conſequently, that the above mentioned plea, for declining communion with us, is of no weight.

And indeed many among them, though they think infant baptiſm, eſpecially when performed by ſprinkling, not regular, yet do ſo far allow the validity of it, that they ſcruple not to hold communion with us. Some baptiſt churches in *England* are founded on this catholic plan. The church, of which the late celebrated Dr. *Foſter* was miniſter, received to her communion ſuch as were baptized in infancy, without requiring them to be rebaptized. The famous Mr. *Whiſton*, was admitted to the communion of this church, after leaving the church of *England*, without rebaptization, which he never would ſubmit to; for though he pronounced baptiſm in infancy, and by ſprinkling, to be wrong, yet he declared

clared it to be 'ſo far real baptiſm, that it *ought not* to be repeated.'* Were our brethren *all* (as indeed *many* of them are) of the ſame generous ſentiments, we ſhould hardly need to be known as different ſects; to be ſure there would be no occaſion for dividing communions upon our different opinions.

With thoſe of leſs generous ſentiments, I beg leave ſeriouſly to expoſtulate. That you have the ſame right as we have, to judge what are the divine inſtitutions, and to practice accordingly, none will deny. But to differ in ſentiment and practice, is one thing; to renounce communion on account of this difference is another. To juſtify this ſtep, it is not ſufficient to prove, that you *may* be in the right: It is neceſſary to prove, that we *muſt* be *fundamentally* in the wrong. You ſuppoſe us to be in an error. But is this error, in your opinion, ſo manifeſt, and ſo groſs, that none who embrace it can be honeſt chriſtians?—Can you demonſtrate, that the ſeal of the covenant of grace was *never* appointed for the children of believers; or, if ſuch an appointment was once made, it has ſince been revoked? that baptiſm *always* ſignifies *immerſion*, and that this mode was *invariably* uſed by the apoſtles? That the age and manner of admiſſion into the church, in uſe among you, is ſo eſſential, that the leaſt deviation nullifies our chriſtianity?—Will you pretend, that there are no real chriſtians in *our* churches? That the word and ordinances adminiſtered in them, have never been bleſſed to men's converſion and ſalvation? That there was nothing of the power of godlineſs, in and after the time of reformation? No true religion among our fathers, and

* Clark's Defence, page 34.

and in the churches founded by them ? That there have been no revivals of piety in theſe churches ſince they were planted ? That God has never owned them by providential protections, or by the effuſions of his ſpirit ? Has there never been any real godlineſs, but what was confined to *your* denomination ; and none at all in that long period, when your ſect did not exiſt ? Theſe things, I know, you will not pretend. Nay, I will enquire farther ; do not many of you date your own converſion at a time when you were in ſentiment and in communion with our churches ? Did not God beſtow this great mercy upon you, while you attended on the miniſtration of his word and ordinances among us ? This, I know, ſome of you profeſs. You believe then, that God has owned, and ſtill owns theſe as *his* churches : and will *you* diſown them ? Will *you* reject that which God receives ? If you think it moſt convenient to worſhip and commune ordinarily with thoſe of your own ſentiments ; yet why need you renounce fellowſhip with us ? Are you doing God ſervice, when you cauſe diviſions and offences in his churches, contrary to the doctrine of peace and unity, that we have received ? Let us not, my brethren, rend the body of Chriſt by our diviſions ; but with united zeal build up his kingdom in the world.

2. The preceding diſcourſes teach us the unwarrantableneſs of rebaptization It is agreed on both ſides that baptiſm is not to be repeated. If then our baptiſm is valid, a repetition of it is contrary to the will of God. In the baptiſm of an infant there is the application of water in the name of the Trinity, as well as in the baptiſm of an adult. If this baptiſm

be not valid, it is *only* becauſe the ſubject had not faith, and did not actually conſent to the baptiſmal obligations. Now if the baptiſm of an infant is a nullity for want of theſe qualifications, the want of them will equally nullify an adult baptiſm; but yet, I preſume, none of our brethren will carry the matter to this length. Let us put a caſe (and ſuch a one as doubtleſs ſometimes happens.) An adult perſon makes a profeſſion of faith and obedience, and is baptized. It ſoon appears from the wickedneſs of his life and the corruptneſs of his principles, that he had no faith in any rational ſenſe, and never conſented to the baptiſmal obligations, but was influenced only by carnal views. The man afterward comes to repentance, confeſſes his hypocriſy in this affair, and owns he had no religious views in the whole tranſaction. He now gives ſatisfactory proofs, that he is become a real penitent and believer. Ought this perſon to be rebaptized? Every one will ſay, No; becauſe he has been baptized, and his baptiſm will ſave him, as he has *now* the anſwer of a good conſcience toward God. When *Simon* the ſorcerer, who had been baptized by *Philip*, diſcovered the vile hypocriſy of his heart, *Peter* directs him to repent, that his ſin might be forgiven; but ſays nothing of his being baptized again: Whereas he ſays to the unbaptized *Jews*, *Repent, and be baptized for the remiſſion of ſins.* But there is juſt the ſame reaſon, why this *hypocrite* ſhould be baptized again upon his repentance, as why the *infant* ſhould; becauſe he no more had faith before baptiſm, and no more conſented to any religious obligation, when he was baptized, than an infant. If a profeſſion of repentance is all that is

neceſſary

neceſſary to our receiving this baptized hypocrite, a profeſſion of faith and obedience, at adult age, is all that is neceſſary to our receiving one baptized in childhood. So that rebaptization is unwarrantable and ſinful even upon the principles of our brethren themſelves; and much more upon ſuppoſition of infants *right* to baptiſm, which, I think, has been abundantly proved. Further,

3. If children are the proper ſubjects of baptiſm, then it is the indiſpenſible duty of parents to preſent them to God in this ordinance, and there muſt be an inexcuſable neglect in thoſe parents, who, though convinced of their childrens right to baptiſm, delay to procure it for them.

Some will ſay perhaps, 'Though we diſpute not their *right* to it, yet it appears to us to be a matter of very little conſequence.'

But certainly it is a matter of *great* conſequence, that you comply with a divine inſtitution. He that breaks the leaſt command ſhall be called leaſt in the kingdom of heaven.

Perhaps you will ſay, 'We can't ſuppoſe the happineſs of our children at all depends upon their baptiſm, ſince it is a thing out of *their* power.' Be it ſo: Yet if it be a duty incumbent on you to bring them to baptiſm, *your* happineſs may depend on your compliance with *this* as well as any *other* duty. But how are you ſure that *their* welfare no way depends upon it? Their welfare much depends on their being religiouſly educated—their education will chiefly lie with you—by their baptiſm you engage to give them a religious education—and if your bringing yourſelves under public ſolemn obligations, will be any motive with you to educate

them

them religiouſly, then their welfare, in ſome degree, depends on their baptiſm. You will ſay, 'You can do your duty as well without ſuch a promiſe as with it.' With equal reaſon might you ſay, you can live a religious life without ever making a profeſſion of religion, as well as if you did. But God has required you to make a profeſſion, becauſe this will be a proper motive and inducement to you to live a religious life; it is a ſuitable means of ſtrengthning your obligations and keeping them in your remembrance. And your dedicating your children to God in baptiſm is founded on the ſame reaſon. It is a promiſe which you take on yourſelves, and a means of reminding you of your obligations, to educate them religiouſly. And this will be an argument, which you may uſe to good advantage in your addreſſes to them.

With reſpect to unbaptized infants, we may be aſſured, God will do them no wrong. But if he has made their baptiſm a condition of the beſtowment of ſome undeſerved favours, who can ſay, this is unjuſt? It would be preſumption to aſſert, that all who die unbaptized are loſt. God's tender mercies are over all his works. But the *promiſe* is to believers, and *their* children And ſhould we ſuppoſe, that the baptized infants of believers, have ſome advantages above other infants in another ſtate, this could not be called abſurd: For it is certainly a part of the ſcheme of God's moral government, that ſome ſhould be benefited by the piety of others. All interceſſion is founded in this principle. You doubtleſs ſometimes pray for your infant children. If you ſee them in danger of death, you pray, not only that their lives may be ſpared,

but

but alſo that their ſouls might be ſaved. But why do you pray for them, if you imagine no good can redound to them from your faith and piety? How often did Chriſt exerciſe his healing mercy toward the ſick on account of the faith of others? How often did he grant cures to children upon the earneſt petitions of their parents? It would then be extremely raſh to conclude, your infants cannot be benefited by your dedicating them to God. Thoſe believers, who brought infants to our Saviour, that he ſhould bleſs them and pray for them, entertained another ſentiment. They thought the good of theſe children, in ſome meaſure, depended on *their* bringing them to Chriſt. And Chriſt commended their piety, and directed others to do likewiſe.

Some perhaps will ſay, 'We believe that infants are ſubjects of baptiſm, but we queſtion our own right to give them up to God therein.' But if you queſtion your own right, it muſt be, becauſe you queſtion whether you have any religion. And can you be contented ſo?

Whatever the difficulty is, which lies in your way, it ſhould be your immediate concern to remove it. Is it not your intention to live a life of religion? Is it not your deſire that your children ſhould grow up before the Lord? Is it not your reſolution to bring them up for him? If it is, then ſay ſo, by a public dedication of yourſelves and your children to God. If it is not, then tremble at the thought of your own impiety and careleſſneſs. If you have no good purpoſes and deſires, you cannot conſiſtently profeſs any; if you have good deſires and purpoſes, ſtrengthen and confirm them by bringing yourſelves under explicit obligations to act agreeably to them.

Finally. Let ſuch as have dedicated their children to God, act under a ſenſe of the vows that are upon them.

If your children are removed by an early death, quietly ſubmit to the will of that ſovereign Lord, whoſe property you have acknowledged them to be, and entertain no anxious thoughts about the manner in which he has diſpoſed of them. When you gave them to him in baptiſm, you profeſſed your faith in his mercy toward them. If you cannot truſt him to diſpoſe of them, why did you dedicate them to him? If you can, why are you anxious about them now ſince he has taken them into his own hands?

If your children live, then bring them up in the nature and admonition of the Lord. If your worldly circumſtances make it neceſſary, that you ſhould commit them to the care of others, ſee that you put them into families where you have reaſon to think, they will be religiouſly educated. If you keep them under your own immediate care, train them up in the way in which they ſhould go; and commend them to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build them up, and to give them an inheritance among the Saints.

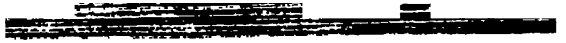
CHRIST's
WARNING TO THE *CHURCHES*,
TO BEWARE OF
FALSE PROPHETS,
WHO COME AS
WOLVES IN *SHEEP's CLOTHING*:
AND THE
MARKS BY WHICH THEY ARE KNOWN:
ILLUSTRATED IN
TWO DISCOURSES.

By JOSEPH LATHROP, D. D.
Paſtor of the firſt Church in Weſt-Springfield.

There were falſe prophets among the people, even as there ſhall be falſe teachers among you——. And many ſhall follow their pernicious ways.
Apoſtle Peter.

THE THIRD EDITION,

WITH AN
APPENDIX
AND
OTHER ENLARGEMENTS.



DISCOURSE I.

MATTHEW, VII. 15, 16.

Beware of False Prophets, who come unto you in Sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening Wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits.

GOD has, in all ages, had a church in the world; and he will continue it, until the world shall be no more. His church has subsisted in different forms; but under every form he has appointed, that there should be publick teachers in it, to open the important truths, and inculcate the sacred duties of religion. Under the old testament there were prophets, and under the new testament there were apostles, ordained for this end: And Christ has plainly signified, that the order of religious teachers shall be preserved, until the saints shall be gathered together in one body in heaven.

As in all ages there have been publick teachers of religion, so there have also been false teachers, who have assumed a sacred character, and with corrupt views, have endeavoured to draw away disciples after them. There were false prophets among the Jews: and Christ and his apostles have warned us, that there shall be false teachers among Christians, who shall privily bring in dangerous heresies, and corrupt men from the simplicity of the gospel.

Our

Our Saviour ſays in the text, *Beware of falſe prophets, who come to you in ſheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.*

But if they come in ſheep's clothing, how ſhall we diſtinguiſh them from ſheep: Chriſt adds, *By their fruits ye ſhall know them.* They may carry on the deception for a time; but their corrupt diſpoſitions will, ſooner or latter, betray them. Obſerve their motions, and you will perceive the ferocity, wildneſs, and greedineſs of the wolf, notwithſtanding the ſtolen fleece on their backs.

My brethren, as this is a time when errour and wickedneſs much abound; when new and ſtrange doctrines are taught; and when teachers, of one ſort and another, are ſtarting up with pretenſions to guide ſouls in the way to heaven; it concerns you carefully to diſtinguiſh between true teachers and corrupt ſeducers. That you may the more eaſily guard againſt the common danger, I ſhall lay before you, with great plainneſs, the marks by which falſe teachers are to be known. I ſhall not apply theſe marks to any ſect or denomination; I ſhall only point them out to you exactly as they lie in the ſcriptures, and ſhall leave you to make the application, as you may find occaſion.

I. They who refuſe to enter into office, in the way which the goſpel preſcribes, are to be rejected: They have one plain mark of falſe teachers. As this is the grand mark of diſtinction, I ſhall conſider it largely.

Our Saviour ſays, John x. 1. *He that entereth not by the door into the ſheepfold, but climbeth up ſome other way, the ſame is a thief and a robber.* Chriſt is the door; not only the door by which the *ſheep* enter

enter into the fold, to enjoy the ſhepherd's care, as mentioned ver. 9, but alſo the door by which the *ſhepherd* enters to take the charge of the ſheep; as here repreſented. To enter by the door, is to enter by Chriſt, and in conformity to the order which he has appointed. The qualifications requiſite in publick teachers and the manner of induction to the ſacred office, are pointed out in various parts of ſcripture, and very particularly in Paul's epiſtles to Timothy and Titus. It is there required, that they be men furniſhed with competent knowledge and learning, eſpecially in divine things; not novices—that they be found in faith; not corrupters of the word of God—that they be holy and blameleſs in their lives; not chargeable with any vice—that they be men of general good report; not of unknown, much leſs of infamous character—and that they be tried and approved by the elders of the church; not ſuch as raſhly intrude themſelves into office.

The apoſtle ſays, Heb. v. 4. *No man taketh this honor to himſelf, but he* only has a right to it, *who is called of God, as was Aaron*, and his ſons. How they were called, we are informed in the 28th chap. of Exodus. They were conſecrated to the prieſthood by Moſes, God's miniſter, who was commanded "to ſeparate that family from among the children of Iſrael, and to anoint, ſanctify and conſecrate them, that they might miniſter in the prieſt's office.

Speaking of the call of the Gentiles, Rom. x. 14. the apoſtle aſks, *how ſhall they hear without a* preacher? *And how ſhall they preach, except they be* ſent? There muſt be a *ſending*, a regular *miſſion*, to authorize them to preach the goſpel. That

That the work of public teaching in the church is not *common* to *every* Chriſtian, who is pleaſed to aſſume it; but peculiar to *ſome*, to thoſe who are *ſent*, and *called* thereto in the goſpel way, the apoſtle plainly inſtructs us in his epiſtle to the Epheſians, chap. iv. and in his firſt epiſtle to the Corinthians, chap. xii. *When Chriſt aſcended on high, he gave gifts to men; and he gave* ſome *apoſtles*; ſome *prophets*; ſome *evangeliſts*; and ſome *paſtors and teachers, for the work of the miniſtry, and for the edifying of the body of Chriſt.* There were only *ſome* to be teachers: It was not intended that every one, who liſted, ſhould act in this capacity, under pretence of edifying the church. *God has ſet* ſome *in the church* to officiate in this character; *firſt apoſtles; then prophets; and then teachers. Are* all *apoſtles? Are* all *prophets? Are* all *teachers?*---By no means. If all the ſeveral parts of the body were one member, where were the body? And if all the members of the church ſhould aſſume one office, where were the church? All things are to be done decently and in order.

The apoſtles themſelves received their commiſſion immediately from Chriſt. In the time of his miniſtry on earth, he gave to the twelve, and afterwards to the ſeventy diſciple, an expreſs command to go and preach the kingdom of God among the Jews. After his reſurrection this commiſſion was enlarged. *All power*, ſays he, *in heaven and in earth is given to me; go ye therefore and teach all nations.* Matth. xxviii. Though they had now *received*, yet they were not furniſhed to *execute* this extenſive commiſſion: Therefore Chriſt adds, *Tarry ye at Jeruſalem*, exerciſing your miniſtry there, *until ye be endued*

endued from on high—for ye ſhall be baptized with the Holy Ghoſt, not many days hence. Accordingly, about ten days after this, on the day of pentecoſt, when they were all aſſembled together (all the hundred and twenty diſciples, who had companied together all the time, that Chriſt went in and out among them; when *theſe* were aſſembled together) the gift of tongues was beſtowed upon them, as that of miracles had been before: And now they were furniſhed to preach the goſpel among all nations. As theſe were ordained immediately by Chriſt, ſo they were authorized to ordain others.

Paul was an apoſtle, not by man, but by Jeſus Chriſt; yet, after he received the goſpel, he preſumed not to preach, until Ananias, who is ſuppoſed to have been one of the ſeventy diſciples, came to him, & by an expreſs command from Chriſt, laid his hands on him, & told him, 'He was a choſen veſſel to bear Chriſt's name among the Gentiles, as well as Jews. The miracle which Ananias performed, in reſtoring Paul to his ſight, was an evidence of the authenticity of his commiſſion. Acts ix. 15, 16, 17, 18--& chap. xxii. 12, 13, 14, 15.

Afterward, when Paul and Barnabas were about to carry the goſpel to the Gentiles, they were, by the direction of the Holy Ghoſt, ſeparated to that work by the prophets and teachers in the church at Antioch, 'who faſted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, and ſent them away.' Acts xiii. 1, 2, 3. And theſe apoſtles, as they went through various cities of the Gentiles, preaching the goſpel, and confirming believers, 'ordained them elders in *every* church, commending them, by faſting and prayer, to the grace of God. Acts xiv. 23.

Theſe elders, who were ordained by the apoſtles and firſt miniſters, were at the ſame time authorized

to tranſmit the office to others. Timothy was ordained by the 'laying on of the hands of the preſbytery, in the preſence of many witneſſes:' And the things, which he had received, the ſame he was ordered to commit to faithful men, who ſhould be able to teach others alſo:' And he is ſolemnly cautioned to 'lay hands ſuddenly on no man.' 1 epiſtle, v. 22—2 epiſtle, ii. 2. And Paul ſays to Titus, who was a miniſter in the iſland of Crete, 'For this purpoſe have I left thee in Crete, that thou mighteſt ordain elders in *every* city, as I had appointed thee.' Chap. i. 5. But why ſhould Titus be left there to ordain elders, if the elderſhip might be aſſumed at pleaſure, or be conveyed by private brethren? There is not in all the goſpel hiſtory, a ſingle example of ordination, or recommendation to the work of the miniſtry, by any other than the biſhops and elders of churches; and to ſuch only are given the directions relating to this matter.

We find alſo, that in caſe a complaint ariſes againſt a miniſter, it is to be referred, not to private brethren, but to elders or paſtors of churches. To Timothy as a biſhop is this inſtruction given by Paul. *Againſt an elder receive not an accuſation, but before two or three witneſſes.* 1 epiſtle, v. 19. He is cautioned not to *ordain* any to the miniſtry, but ſuch as could bring a good report; for when one deſires an office, it is incumbent on him to exhibit evidence of his qualifications. But againſt one *already in office* a bare report is not to be received; there muſt be an accuſation ſupported by two or three witneſſes, to eject him from office, or bring him under cenſure.

Every church has a right to *chooſe* her own miniſter;

iſter; but ſhe cannot *make* a miniſter. He muſt be ſeparated to the work by the elders of the churches. When it was judged neceſſary, that a certain number of meet perſons ſhould be appointed to preſide over the diſtribution of the church ſtock, and the miniſtration to the poor, the twelve apoſtles referred the *choice* to the multitude of the diſciples; but the *appointment* and *ordination* they reſerved to themſelves. 'They called the multitude of the diſciples, and ſaid, Look ye out ſeven men of honeſt report, whom *we* may appoint over this buſineſs: And they choſe ſeven, and ſet them before the apoſtles, who faſted and prayed and laid their hands on them.' Acts vi.

A Chriſtian church is compared to a houſhold, and to a city, in reſpect of the order and government, the peace and unity, that ought to be preſerved in it. But if every man might aſſume the office of a teacher at pleaſure, where would be the order and unity? There would be the ſame confuſion and diſtraction, as in a ſtate where every one claimed a right to exerciſe the powers of magiſtracy.

You ſee then, that they, who take on them the office of teachers in the church, without ſubmitting their call and qualifications to that mode of trial, which the goſpel has inſtituted, are to be conſidered as intruders, and rejected as impoſtors; for they come not in by the door. Their effected contempt of regular approbation betrays a conſciouſneſs of their want of the qualifications which the goſpel requires, and indicates ſuch arrogance, pride and preſumption, as ought never to appear in one, who profeſſes to have learnt the religion of the meek and *lowly Jeſus.*

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The apoſtle Peter, 1 epiſtle, ii. 1. ſpeaks of ſome falſe teachers, who *privily* bring into the Church damnable hereſies, and ſeduce many to follow their pernicious ways. Jude, ſpeaking of the ſame perſons, deſcribes them *as creeping in unawares*; in a ſecret ſubtle manner. This *coming in privily*, and *creeping in unawares*, anſwers to our Saviour's deſcription of them, as not entering into the ſheepfold *by the door*, but climbing up *ſome other way*. It eſpecially intends their aſſuming the office of teachers, without the approbation of thoſe, whom the goſpel has conſtituted judges of their qualifications. The apoſtle Jude illuſtrates their character, by comparing them to the ancient *Corahites*. *They have periſhed in the gainſaying of Corah*. The ſtory alluded to is in the 16th chap. of Numbers. Corah and his companions took upon them to offer incenſe, and exerciſe the functions of the prieſthood. They murmured againſt the family of Aaron, which had been conſecrated to this holy ſervice. They ſaid, 'Ye take too much upon you ſeeing all the congregation are holy, and the Lord is among them: Wherefore lift ye up yourſelves above the congregation?' They called 'the ſtanding order' of miniſters a tyranny, a uſurpation of rights common to all the Lord's people: They pretended, that every man, who pleaſed, might officiate in the prieſthood. Moſes ſays, 'God hath brought you near to him to do the ſervice of the tabernacle, and do you ſeek the prieſthood alſo? Ye take too much upon you, ye ſons of Levi.' How their preſumption iſſued, you well remember. Now the apoſtle ſays, theſe falſe teachers, who crept into the church unwares, were *guilty* of the gainſaying of Corah. They had aſ-

ſumed

ſumed the ſacred office like him, uncalled and unauthorized; were guilty of his preſumption, and expoſed to his condemnation.

It will perhaps be ſaid, 'In the apoſtles' time, there were ſome, who had an immediate call from the Spirit to preach the goſpel; and this may be the caſe ſtill; and if a man is moved by the Spirit, he muſt obey.'

But if the Spirit moves a man to preach the goſpel, it will undoubtedly move him to act conformably to the rules of the goſpel, and to ſeek an introduction to the work, in the manner which the goſpel preſcribes. The divine Spirit never dictates to the heart a line of conduct, which it has forbidden in the word. They, who deſpiſe and neglect the goſpel-method of introduction to the ſacred office, under pretence of ſome inward motion, are not influenced by the *Holy* Spirit, but inſtigated by a ſpirit of a very different character.

There is no inſtance, in the new teſtament, of any man's aſſuming the office of a preacher *merely* on an *internal* call of the Spirit. The Holy Ghoſt commanded Ananias to go and declare to Paul, that he was choſen to preach Chriſt's name: And the Holy Ghoſt ſaid to the prophets and teachers at Antioch, Separate me Barnabas and Paul to the work, to which I have called them. But we find not, that Paul or Barnabas, or any other of the primitive preachers, ran to the work before they were ſent, under pretence of an internal call of the Spirit, which no body knew but themſelves. In the preſent day the tables are turned. It is the *preacher* now who is directed by the Spirit; not they who are to ſet him apart to the work. If it

could be ſuppoſed, that one might have ſuch a ſecret command from the Spirit, this is only evidence to *himſelf*: It will not warrant *others* to *attend* on him; it can therefore anſwer no purpoſe. What endleſs confuſion would follow from admitting ſuch pretences! Any man, who is diſhoneſt enough, may pretend ſuch a call; and who ſhall contradict him? What order can there be in the church? The man may be ignorant, immoral or heretical.—But who ſhall judge, cenſure and ſilence him? He ſtill pleads a call from the Spirit, and he will be judged by no man.

If one pretends ſuch a ſpecial divine direction, as his warrant to preach, let him manifeſt it by miracles; as the apoſtles manifeſted their commiſſion. Miracles have ceaſed, and ſo have all immediate revelations; and the man, who now pretends to them, is a deſigning impoſtor, or deluded enthuſiaſt.

If ſuch arrogant pretenſions ſhould be accompanied, as they uſually are, with an open contempt of human learning, and of that *ſtudy* and *attendance on reading*, which Paul enjoins on the miniſter, we may juſtly ſuſpect, they are held up as a ſubſtitute for real qualifications, a cover for ignorance, and an excuſe for lazineſs.

In the apoſtles' time, there were inſtances of the Spirit's deſignating the perſons to be ordained to the miniſtry; but it is evident, that this manner of deſignation was not to be continued in the church, becauſe the Holy Ghoſt has taken care to furniſh the church with ſtanding rules for her conduct in this matter. Timothy, who was ordained by the elders of the church, is commanded to commit the *ſame office* which he had received, to faithful men,

who

who ſhould be able to teach others. But how ſhall Timothy know, who are theſe able, and faithful men? Shall he ordain every man, who ſays, The Spirit moves him to preach? Or will the Spirit immediately point out to Timothy the man who is to be ordained? No: He muſt inquire into the qualifications of thoſe who offer themſelves to the work. Paul ſays to him, 'If a man deſire the office of a biſhop, he deſireth a good work. A biſhop then muſt be blameleſs, ſober, of good behaviour, apt to teach, not given to wine, not a novice; moreover he muſt have a good report of them that are without.' Surely, if Paul had ſuppoſed, that the Spirit would immediately and ſupernaturally direct in this matter, he would not have inſtructed Timothy ſo particularly, what qualifications he muſt find in thoſe, whom he ordained to be teachers in the church.

The inſtructions given to Titus are the ſame. 'For this cauſe I left thee in Crete, that thou mayeſt ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: If any man be blameleſs, ſober, juſt, holy, temperate, holding faſt the faithful word, and able by ſound doctrine to exhort, and to convince gainſayers.'

Since the Spirit of God has given in the goſpel, ſufficient directions concerning this matter; to theſe let us attend, and look for no other.

It has been urged in favour of private brethren's teaching in the church, That "the apoſtle ſays to the Corinthians, *Ye may all propheſy one by one, that all may learn and be comforted.*" 1 epiſtle, xiv. 31.

But could he intend, that all the *Chriſtians* in Corinth might *propheſy* or *preach?* By no means; for

for then we muſt ſuppoſe that even *women* were to commence preachers, if they pleaſed, contrary to his expreſs inſtructions both here, and in his firſt epiſtle to Timothy. By *all* he means *all the prophets*, as will be evident, if you take the whole ſentence in its connexion. 'Let the *prophets* ſpeak, two or three, and let the other judge. If any thing be revealed to another that ſitteth by, let the firſt hold his peace; for ye may all propheſy one by one.' In the Corinthian church there were many endued with ſpiritual gifts; who, being ambitious to diſplay their gifts, uſed to ſpeak ſeveral at once, to the confuſion of one another, and of the whole aſſembly. To correct this diſorder, the apoſtle ſays, 'If any man ſpeak, let it be by two; or, at the moſt, by three,' i. e. Let not more than two or three ſpeak in the ſame meeting; and let not theſe ſpeak all at once, 'but by courſe,' one after another: 'Let the *prophets* ſpeak two or three, in ſucceſſion, 'and let the other judge.' 'And if, while one is propheſying, any thing be revealed to another,' i. e. another *prophet*, 'let the firſt hold his peace.' Let the firſt finiſh his diſcourſe, and ceaſe from ſpeaking, before the other begins. 'For ye may all propheſy one by one. If ye will obſerve order in your aſſemblies, all the *prophets* may have opportunity to ſpeak; ye need not interrupt one another. And do not pretend, that ye are ſo overpowered by the divine influence, that you cannot refrain, but muſt immediately give vent to the fervid ebulitions of grace; 'for the ſpirits of the prophets are ſubject to the prophets.' God is not the author of confuſion, but of peace, as in all the churches of the ſaints.' *Prophets* were an order of

public

public teachers in the primitive church: *Theſe* only are the perſons, who the apoſtle ſays, may all propheſy. The words therefore, far from allowing, plainly forbid private Chriſtians to ſtart up and teach in religious aſſemblies.

I will mention another paſſage, which has been ſometimes perverted to juſtify private brethren in aſſuming the office of teachers. *At the time* of Stephen's martyrdom, *there was great perſecution againſt the church, which was at Jeruſalem, and they were all ſcattered abroad through the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apoſtles.*——*And they, that were ſcattered abroad, went every where preaching the word.* Acts 8.

But are we to ſuppoſe that the *all*, who were ſcattered abroad, were all the *members* of the Church in Jeruſalem, and that *all theſe* went every where preaching? This would be abſurd; for then we muſt ſuppoſe the *women* turned preachers. The church at Jeruſalem was, at this time, very large. We read of three thouſands at one time, and five thouſands at another, converted to the Chriſtian faith; beſides other conſiderable acceſſions. A great proportion of theſe were in and about Jeruſalem. That all the believers in this city ſhould go forth to preach, is not ſuppoſable: So many were not needed, nor could ſo many be employed, in the regions of Judea and Samaria, and the other places whither they went; for they preached to Jews only. And if the fire of perſecution was ſo hot that no profeſſed believer could live in Jeruſalem, why were not the apoſtles ſcattered among the reſt?

It is certain that the church in Jeruſalem was not diſperſed; for ſtill there were in Judea *brethren* and apoſtles,

apoſtles; and in the *city* there were *devout men, who carried Stephen to his burial;* and *diſciples* to whom Paul *eſſayed to join himſelf*, after he came from Damaſcus. Yea, we are expreſsly told, that when they, who, by this perſecution, were ſcattered abroad, had gone as far as Phenice, Cyprus and Antioch, preaching the word with ſucceſs, *tidings of theſe things came to the ears of the church which was in Jeruſalem.* Acts viii. 2—ix. 26—xi. 1, 19, 22.

Since there were ſtill *brethren* with the *apoſtles*, and ſince we ſtill find in Jeruſalem *devout men, diſciples* and a *church; the all*, who were ſcattered abroad, cannot be all the *Chriſtians* or *believers* in the city.

Who then were *theſe all?* Doubtleſs they were *the hundred and twenty diſciples*, who had companied together, while Chriſt went in and out among them; and on whom the Holy Ghoſt had lately fallen. *Theſe* are mentioned in the firſt and ſecond chapters of the Acts, and are, once and again, called *the all. Theſe* were aſſembled together, when a ſucceſſor to Judas was elected. They were *all* together in one place on the day of pentecoſt. On *theſe* the Holy Ghoſt was ſhed forth, and cloven tongues, like as of fire, ſat on *each of them.* They were *all* filled with the Holy Ghoſt and ſpake with tongues.

Grotius, *Lightfoot*, and *Whitby*, ſay, that 'they *all*, who were now filled with the Holy Ghoſt, were all the hundred and twenty.' This appears to have been a received opinion in the ancient church. *Jerom*, *Chryſoſtom* and *Oecumenius*, obſerve, that 'the Holy Ghoſt fell on the hundred and twenty to complete the prophecy of Joel.' *Whitby* ſays,

'It

'It was not the whole church, or body of the laity, that was ſcattered abroad, but the hundred and eight, who were full of the Holy Ghoſt; the perſecution aiming chiefly at thoſe, who were ſuch as Stephen was.——'

Theſe were now plainly authorized to preach the goſpel, having, in a publick manner, received this ſupernatural gift, and being, according to Chriſt's promiſe, endued with power from on high; and therefore, when they were ſcattered from Jeruſalem, they went every where preaching the word.

But whoever theſe preachers are ſuppoſed to be, one thing is undeniable; they were endued with miraculous gifts and powers, which were the publick ſeal of their divine commiſſion. For it is expreſsly ſaid, Acts xi. 21, 'The *Hand* of the *Lord* was with them.' This phraſe is, more than once, uſed by Luke for the ſupernatural and miraculous gifts of the Spirit. When Peter and John and their company prayed, that God would *ſtretch out his Hand to heal* and to enable them to *do ſigns and wonders in Chriſt's name;* they in anſwer to their prayer, *were filled with the Holy Ghoſt.* Acts iv. 30, 31. Theſe men went forth to preach with a publick warrant from heaven. Their example, therefore, will by no means juſtify private Chriſtians, who have no ſuch warrant, in going every where to preach the word. If any, deſpiſing the ordinary miſſion appointed by God, plead an extraordinary commiſſion to preach every where, let them ſhew the extraordinary evidences of this commiſſion by miraculous gifts and aſſiſtances. God never ſends men to do his work, without ſome teſtimony

timony ſufficient to juſtify others in receiving them.*

It muſt, by this time be manifeſt to you, that no man can claim a right to officiate in the character of a miniſter or teacher in the church, until he has been approbated and recommended to the work by the elders of churches.

I ſhall now ſhew, that whenever miniſters or preachers travel into parts, in which they are not known, they ought to carry with them competent credentials; and that no man has a right to act, and Chriſtians have no right to receive a man, in this

* It has been aſked, 'What evidence we have, that Apollos, before he was received in the character of a Chriſtian preacher, had been approved by the elders of churches.' It is ſufficient to anſwer We have evidence from the rule and practice of the apoſtles already illuſtrated.

We are not to expect a particular account of every ordination any more than of every baptiſm, in the church: and in neither caſe can the ſilence of ſcripture, in certain inſtances, be urged as an argument againſt an eſtabliſhed uſage.

There is no evidence that Apollos acted as a Chriſtian preacher in the church, much leſs, that he was acknowledged in this character, before he received regular approbation. When he firſt came to Epheſus, Acts xviii. he knew the way of the Lord, only as far as John's baptiſm, or doctrine, had led him. He knew that the kingdom of heaven, or the time of the Meſſiah's appearance, was not come. But that Jeſus of Nazareth was this Meſſiah, had riſen from the dead, and ſhed down the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, he had not been inſtructed. He firſt began to ſpeak in the Jewiſh ſynagogue, probably, as many others did, by invitation or permiſſion of the ruler of the ſynagogue. He ſpake not as a Chriſtian preacher but rather as a learned and pious Jew, who was looking for redemption in Iſrael. For it is expreſsly remarked, that *he knew only the baptiſm of John.* Aquila, who had been inſtructed by Paul, and whom Paul left at Epheſus, when he went from thence, and whom ſome ſuppoſe to have been ordained a preacher by this apoſtle, perceiving that Apollos knew only the doctrine of John, 'took him, and expounded to him the way of the Lord more perfectly. And accordingly we find, that when Apollos went to Achaia, 'he helped the believers,

iis ſacred character, unleſs he exhibits ſufficient ſtimony of his being veſted with it. This is a ſt concluſion from the poſition already proved; id is farther evident from the uniform practice in ie apoſtles' times.

Paul, after he had preached Chriſt for ſome me in Damaſcus, went to Jeruſalem, and eſſayed join himſelf to the diſciples there: But they ere all afraid of him, and believed not that he as a diſciple. Acts ix. So cautious were they not receive one, who had not given them ſufficient idence of the truth of his pretenſions. But Barabas took him and brought him to the apoſtles, ie proper judges in caſes of this nature, and deared to them, how Paul had ſeen Chriſt in the ay, and how he had preached boldly at Damaſcus the name of Chriſt; and on this teſtimony of arnabas, who was himſelf a miniſter of Chriſt, ey received him; and he was with them, coming in

lievers. and mightily convinced the Jews, ſhewing from the riptures, that Jeſus was the Chriſt.' Before he went into Achaia, he brethren' in Epheſus 'wrote to the diſciples, exhorting them receive him.' As there were now many believers, ſo doubtleſs ere were alſo elders or miniſters in Epheſus. We find, not long ter this, Acts xx. that there was a number of elders in that city, ho had the overſight of the church there; that they had been ere for ſome time, and had been acquainted with Pauls miniſtry, rom the firſt day that he went into Aſia.' It is certain then that there ere elders in Epheſus, as early as the time when Apollos was there. heſe probably were the brethren, or at leaſt among the brethren, ho recommended him to the diſciples in Achaia. For *brethren* is term often uſed for *elders* of the church. It is by no means ſupſable that Apollos ſhould be known to none but private Chriſtians. learned and eloquent a man, who had read and ſpoken openly the ſynagogue, and been inſtructed by Aquila, would certainly come acquainted with the elders. If he was known to them, ubtleſs they concurred in this recommendation; and if they remended him, they had previouſly approved him in the charac- in which he went to Achaia.

in and going out at Jeruſalem. You will obſerv he aſſociated with the *apoſtles*. He did not ſhu them: He ſubmitted to be examined and judge by them; and being accepted, he conſorted an co-operated with them. How differently he con ducted from impoſtors and deceivers, who chooſe t avoid the company of the regular miniſters o Chriſt!

In the apoſtolick times, the preachers of the go pel, when they travelled from place to place, ca ried with them written credentials. Paul ſays, Cor. iii. *Need we, as ſome others, letters of comme dation from you, or epiſtles of commendation to you Ye are our epiſtle, known and read of all men.* H words import, that *others*, that miniſters in genera when they travelled beyond the circle of their a quaintance, had occaſion for letters of commend tion, although he himſelf was, by this time, know ſo univerſally in the churches, and eſpecially Corinth, that he needed no ſuch letters.

Judas and Silas are very particularly recommen ed to the church in Antioch by the apoſtles, elde and church in Jeruſalem. Acts xv. 25. They a called 'choſen men; men who had hazarded the lives for the name of Chriſt,' and whoſe inform tion might be received with full credit. 'An they, *being prophets alſo themſelves*, exhorted t brethren with many words.' Verſe 32.

When Timothy went from Philippi to Corint to carry Paul's firſt epiſtle to the Corinthians, Pa in the epiſtle which he ſent by him, recommen him as a miniſter, in theſe words; chap. xvi. Timothy come, ſee that he may be among y without fear; for he worketh the work of Go as

as I alſo do. Let no man therefore deſpiſe him.' He recommends him alſo to the Theſſalonians. 1 epiſtle, iii. 2. 'We have ſent Timotheus our brother, and miniſter of God, and our fellow-labourer in the goſpel of Chriſt to eſtabliſh you.——'

When Paul was at Rome, he wrote a letter to the Epheſian Chriſtians, and ſent it by the hand of Tychicus; and, that they might receive Tychicus without diſtruſt, Paul thus recommends him; 'That ye may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother, and faithful miniſter in the Lord, ſhall make known to you all things, whom I have ſent unto you for the ſame purpoſe.' Chap. vi. In like manner he recommends him to the Coloſſians in his letter to them. 'All my ſtate ſhall Tychicus declare, who is a beloved brother, faithful miniſter and fellow-ſervant in the Lord. Chap. iv.

He commends Timothy and Epaphroditus to the Philippians. Chap. ii. 'I truſt to ſend Timotheus ſhortly unto you——Ye know the proof of him, that, as a ſon with the father, he had ſerved with me in the goſpel——And I ſuppoſed it neceſſary to ſend to you Epaphroditus my brother and companion in labour and fellow-ſoldier—I ſend him—receive him in the Lord with all gladneſs, and hold ſuch in reputation.'

Paul tells the Coloſſians, chap. iv. 10, that 'concerning Marcus, ſiſter's ſon to Barnabas, they had already received commandment; and if he came to them, they were to receive him.'

When the eloquent, learned, and fervent Apollos, who had ſpoken boldly at Epheſus, and taught diligently the way of the Lord, was diſpoſed to paſs

into

into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the diſciples to receive him. Acts xviii.

John, in his third epiſtle, recommends Demetrius, as one who had a good report of all men, and of the truth itſelf? and as one, of whom he could himſelf bear teſtimony with great confidence.

Peter, in his firſt epiſtle, which he wrote to the Jewiſh Chriſtians, diſperſed through the provinces of Aſia, fails not to make honourable mention of Sylvanus, who carried the epiſtle to them. 'By Sylvanus, a faithful brother, have I written.'

Yea, we find, not only miniſters, but private Chriſtians, recommended to the fellowſhip of ſaints. Paul commends Oneſimus to the Coloſſians, as a faithful and beloved brother; and Phebe to the Romans, as a member of the church in Cenchrea, and exhorts them to receive her.

But I have already dwelt too long on this argument. I am ſure, it muſt by this time, be exceedingly plain to you all, that we ought not only to reject thoſe, who without regular approbation, have aſſumed the office of teachers in the church; but cautiouſly to avoid *ſtrangers*, who, while they pretend to be miniſters, exhibit no proper credentials of their miniſterial, or even Chriſtian character, and of their regular ſtanding in the church of Chriſt. The church in Thyatira is ſeverely reproved by Chriſt himſelf, 'becauſe ſhe ſuffered thoſe to teach, who called themſelves prophets;' but, that they were ſuch, gave no better evidence, than their own word. On the other hand, the church in Epheſus is commended, becauſe ſhe could not bear them who were evil; and tried them who ſaid they were apoſtles, but were not, and found them liars. Revelations ii. 2, 20.

From

From the preceding obſervations it appears, that in the primitive church there were two ſorts of miniſters; *extraordinary*, as apoſtles, prophets and evangeliſts; and *ordinary*, as paſtors and teachers. The *former* who were employed in ſpreading the goſpel and planting churches in the world, were endued with miraculous powers, by which they were enabled, as well to authenticate, as to execute, their extraordinary commiſſion. This ſort of miniſters, and this kind of evidence were to continue, only ſo long as the ſtate of the church required them. When the canon of revelation ſhould be completed, 'then propheſies were to fail, tongues were to ceaſe, and knowledge,' as an immediate, ſupernatural gift, 'was to vaniſh away. 1 Cor. 13, 8.

The *latter*, or *ordinary* miniſters, were ſtated paſtors, who laboured in word and doctrine, for the edification of the churches, over which they were made overſeers. Theſe appear not to have generally poſſeſſed miraculous powers. They were to prove their miniſterial authority by ordinary evidence; as by a ſolemn ſeparation to their work before many witneſſes; and, when occaſion required, by a recommendation from known miniſters or churches. This order of religious teachers is to continue in the church to the end of the world. Eph. iv. 11, 13.

All miniſters muſt now appear in one or other of theſe characters. If they come as ordinary teachers, they are to exhibit the ordinary evidence of having been regularly approbated to their work, and of their good ſtanding in the church. If they come as extraordinary miniſters, pretending to be ſupernaturally called to, and endued for their work,

and hence claiming an authority to go every where preaching the word, let them produce the great, divine ſeal of their high commiſſion by inconteſtible miracles. Otherwiſe we are not to receive them, nor bid them, God ſpeed.

It may be aſked, 'What if a miniſter regularly ordained, ſhould afterwards become groſsly heretical, negligent or immoral? Is he not to be called *a falſe teacher?*—Rather perhaps he is to be called a corrupt, wicked, or ſlothful ſervant. His guilt is not a diſorderly intruſion into office, but a criminal perverſion of, and unfaithfulneſs in his office. He is not, however, by any means to be tolerated in his wickedneſs; but the meaſures preſcribed in the goſpel are to be applied for his amendment. In caſe of contumacy, or incorrigibleneſs, he is to be rejected by a publick ſentence of the elders of churches. Until trial and conviction he is in regular ſtanding for no man is to be condemned without trial. If in the introduction of miniſters goſpel order is obſerved, as it generally is in our ſtanding churches, there is little danger, that one groſsly vicious, or eſſentially erroneous, will long be retained in office, becauſe he will be ſubject to trial and cenſure. But if every man may, at pleaſure, aſſume the miniſterial office, and run whither he liſts; and people will countenance the aſſumption, by attending his miniſtrations, wherever he goes, there can be no ſecurity. For who ſhall diſplace from office the man who claims an independent right to aſſume and retain it? He will ſubmit to no judicature; he will ſpurn every admonition and cenſure; diſcarded in one place, he will carry his impoſitions to another; and none knows where the miſchief will end.

end. Thoſe Chriſtians, who imprudently follow and encourage vagrant, unknown, unrecommended teachers, do their utmoſt to ſubvert the diſcipline of the churches, and to break down the barriers which the goſpel has placed againſt the irruption of ignorance, error and vice. *Chriſt's ſheep will not follow a ſtranger; they will flee from him, for they know not the voice of ſtrangers.*

DISCOURSE II.

I PROCEED now to point out to you ſome other marks of falſe teachers. On theſe I ſhall not have occaſion greatly to enlarge.

II. Our Saviour tells us, Falſe prophets come *in ſheep's clothing*, but inwardly they are *ravening wolves*. Ye ſhall know them by their fruits.'

They will make great *profeſſions*, and perhaps, for a while, exhibit ſome plauſible *appearance* of humility, peaceableneſs, meekneſs, and indifference to the world. They will declare, that they have no party deſigns, ſiniſter views, or ſelfiſh aims; that they are only ſolicitous to promote your ſpiritual & eternal intereſt; while their real intention is to divide, ſcatter & devour you. You may poſſibly be deceived at firſt by their fair pretenſions, & be carried away by their diſſimulation. But obſerve them carefully, & you will ſoon be undeceived. Suppoſe, they ſhould meet with oppoſition, or provocation, or be diſappointed

diſappointed in their views; then ſee whether they retain the *lamb-like* gentleneſs of which they boaſted. No: You may now begin to diſcern the wolf: Now they betray their pride, paſſion and reſentment: Now they break you into parties, that they may catch ſome of you. They may appear modeſt and diffident at firſt; but ſuppoſe, they ſhould find their influence increaſed by the number of their adherents and followers; then ſee whether they are ſo moderate in their views; whether they are content with ſmall things? No: They will leap into one fold and another for new prey. A good ſhepherd attends to his own proper charge: The wolf is a rapacious, prowling animal: Not ſatisfied with taking out of one flock, he roams from flock to flock, and can never have enough.

III. Falſe teachers bring in dangerous hereſies privily, unawares, and with cunning craftineſs. Eph. iv. 14. 2 Peter, ii. 1. Jude iv.

It is not every erroneous doctrine that marks one to be an impoſtor. In this imperfect ſtate an entire uniformity of ſentiment is not to be expected. In thoſe differences of opinion which affect not the eſſence of religion, candour and forbearance will take place among the virtuous and diſcerning. Errours, which mar the ſubſtance, and defeat the deſign of the goſpel, ought to awaken the concern, and warm the zeal of a Chriſtian. To draw with preciſion the line, and mark with exactneſs the boundaries between theſe different kinds of errours, will undoubtedly be a matter of difficulty. Though the extremes may be glaring, yet where the ſhades mingle, it is a nice eye that can diſcriminate. But whatever may be the errours taught, craft & artifice

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in teaching them are always to be condemned.— The man who aſſumes the character of a *Chriſtian* teacher, will not openly avow doctrines directly and palpably ſubverſive of the goſpel; for among Chriſtians, theſe doctrines, in their naked and undiſguiſed form, will not be received. The ſacred writers, therefore, make a ſubtil and inſidious *manner* of propagating errours, no leſs than the errours themſelves, a mark of impoſtors. Of the artifice with which they proceed the goſpel has given us warning. They uſually begin with ſmaller errours, and gradually advance to greater. They open not themſelves fully at once, but with caution and reſerve. They will not alarm you by calling in queſtion the grand principles and doctrines of religion: They rather chooſe to lead you on gently, ſtep by ſtep, from one errour to another. The apoſtle tells Timothy, 'Evil men and ſeducers wax worſe and worſe, deceiving and being deceived.' In this reſpect he compares them to the firſt deceiver. 2 Cor. x. Speaking of falſe apoſtles, he ſays, 'They are deceitful workers, transforming themſelves into the apoſtles of Chriſt, and into miniſters of righteouſneſs, even as Satan himſelf was transformed into an angel of light.' He expreſſeth his concern for the Corinthians, 'Leſt, as the ſerpent beguiled Eve through his ſubtilty, ſo their minds ſhould be corrupted from the ſimplicity, that is in Chriſt.' The ſerpent beguiled Eve, not by bold and direct temptations, but by ſly and artful enticements. He firſt enquires, whether God had forbidden the uſe of *every* tree. When he was told, that there was a grant of *all* the trees except *one*, which was guarded with a threatening of death

death; he replies, 'Ye ſhall not *ſurely* die.' There is not that danger, which you apprehend. He next intimates ſome peculiar advantage in eating of this particular tree. 'Your eyes ſhall be opened, and ye ſhall be as gods, knowing good and evil.' Probably he inſinuates, that he was an angel of light ſent from heaven to take off the reſtraint. Thus, by degrees ſeduced, the woman caſt a longing eye on the fruit: The ſight inflamed her deſire: This, concurring with his ſuggeſtions, prevailed on her to take and eat.

In like manner the miniſters of Satan are cautious not to ſtartle men at firſt by too bold ſuggeſtions. They will affect, in moſt points, to conform to the miniſters of righteouſneſs; to think as they think, or not greatly to differ from them; and only to ſerve the ſame important intereſt, which *they* are ſerving. They will ſuit themſelves to all companies; and, as the apoſtle ſays, 'their word will be yea, and nay;' one thing or another, juſt according to the humours and notions of the people they converſe with; until, they imagine, they have gained their confidence, and ſeduced them ſo far, that it is impoſſible to renew them again to repentance: Then they will venture more boldly to diſcover their ſentiments and open their deſigns.

IV. Unruly and vain talkers and deceivers are deſcribed as privately tampering with people of leſs knowledge and diſcernment, becauſe theſe are more eaſily deluded.

They chooſe not, in the firſt inſtance, to practiſe on thoſe who are of full age, and who, by reaſon of uſe, have their ſenſes exerciſed to diſcern both good and evil. They ſhun ſuch, leſt their deſigns

ſigns ſhould be diſcovered, and their errours expoſed. They rather attempt to ſeduce the young, the weak, the wavering, the diſcontented; that, having gained theſe, they may more eaſily make impreſſions on the minds of thoſe who are connected with them. The old ſerpent firſt applied to Eve, whom having ſeduced, he by her influence drew the man into diſobedience. The ſame artifice is practiced ſtill. Corrupt teachers, we are told, 'beguile *unſtable* ſouls;' and 'creep into houſes and lead captive *ſilly women*, laden with ſins, and led away with divers luſts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth;' thus 'they ſubvert *whole houſes*, teaching things, which they ought not, for filthy lucre's ſake.' In this ſenſe they are ſaid 'to follow the way, and to hold the doctrine of Balaam,' who taught Balak to caſt a ſtumbling-block before the children of Iſrael by ſeducing them to marry the daughters of Moab, that by this idolatrous connexion, they might be enticed to eat things ſacrificed to idols. 2 Peter, 2, 14, 15.—2 Tim. iii. 6.—Titus, i. 11.—and Rev. ii. 14, compared with Numb. xxv. 1, 2.

V. Another mark of falſe teachers is an implacable malignity againſt the ſtanding, regular miniſters of the goſpel.

Read the epiſtle of Jude, and Paul's epiſtle to the Corinthians and Galatians, and you will ſee this ſpirit to be characteriſtick of them. They not only cenſure ſome unworthy characters, but declaim againſt the whole order, and ſpare no pains to infuſe into people's minds prejudices againſt all that belong to it. Jude ſays of thoſe ungodly men, who, in his day, had crept in unawares; 'They ſpeak evil

evil of things, which they know not'—ſlander miniſters and churches, with which they are utterly unacquainted. 'They deſpiſe dominion and ſpeak evil of dignities.' The falſe apoſtles reproached Paul, not only as a man of diminutive figure and contemptible ſpeech, but as one that was carnal, walked after the fleſh, and preached only for wages. But they commended themſelves, as making the goſpel free, and as preaching only from love to ſouls, without a deſire of worldly gain. And what was their aim?—The apoſtle tells us; and he was well acquainted with them. 'They zealouſly affect you, but not well: Yea, they would exclude *us*, that ye may affect *them*.' Gal. iv. 17. marg. Their hypocritical pretenſions of making the goſpel without charge, and their perpetual clamour againſt Paul for taking wages of the churches, were the reaſons, why he ſo often and ſo largely ſtated and proved the right of miniſters to live by the goſpel, and the obligation of Chriſtians to ſupport them. But while he claimed a right to a liberal maintenance, he tells the Corinthians, he had waved this right among them, taking *wages* of other churches to do them ſervice.' And this he did, on charitable and prudential reaſons, 'that he might cut off occaſion from the falſe apoſtles, who deſired occaſion, that wherein they gloried, they might be found even as he.' They *gloried*, as falſe teachers moſt commonly do, in making the goſpel free: But Paul ſays, They are 'deceitful workers.' He acted openly and without diſguiſe. He aſſerted his *right*, but remitted the *exerciſe* of it in Corinth. They were vain talkers and deceivers; they denied the right, and yet exerciſed it in a ſurreptitious manner.

ner. While they gloried in preaching freely, they actually took of the Corinthians ſo extravagantly, that they even 'devoured them, and brought them into *bondage*.' And yet there were ſome in Corinth, who, while they joined in the clamour againſt Paul as an hireling, would patiently bear any thing, and every thing from theſe deceivers. 'Have I committed an offence, ſays he, becauſe I preached to *you* the goſpel of God freely?'—'But ye ſuffer fools gladly; for ye ſuffer, if a man bring you into bondage; if a man devour you; if a man take of you; if a man exalt himſelf; if a man ſmite you on the face.' But how did theſe deceitful workers carry on their deſign of taking wages, while they pretended to have none? It ſeems they employed accomplices to take, or rather extort gifts for them: And then, to cover the artifice more deeply, and prevent a ſuſpicion of their privity, they accuſed Paul of this duplicity. But he utterly diſavows it, and appeals to the Corinthians for the falſity of the charge. He ſays, 'I was not burdenſome to you;—for I ſeek not yours, but you—very gladly will I ſpend and be ſpent for you.'—'But be it ſo; I did not burden you, yet being crafty, I caught you with guile.' i. e. Theſe deceitful workers, conſcious of their own artifice, will ſay, 'Though I did not burden you myſelf, yet I craftily employed others to take of you for me.' He deſpiſes the inſinuation. 'Did I make a gain of you by any of them whom I ſent to you? I deſired Titus, and with him I ſent a brother. Did Titus make a gain of you? Walked we not in the ſame ſpirit, and in the ſame ſteps?' Paul 'renounced the hidden things of diſhoneſty, not walking

in craftineſs.—' But theſe deceivers, ' through covetouſneſs, with feigned words made merchandize of their hearers.' 1 Cor. ix. and 2 Cor. x. and ſeq. and 2 Peter, ii. 3.

This leads me to notice another mark which the apoſtle mentions.

VI. This ſort of teachers are guided by no *line*, and confined to no *meaſure*; but run from place to place, enter into other men's labours, and build on other men's foundation.

Wherever the apoſtles came preaching the goſpel, they exhibited full evidence, as of their general commiſſion, ſo of their particular warrant to preach in that place. When any ſought a proof of Chriſt ſpeaking in Paul, he was able to anſwer, ' The ſigns of an apoſtle have been wrought among you—and we have been thoroughly made manifeſt among you in all things.' He ſays to the Corinthians, ' We dare not make ourſelves of the number, nor compare ourſelves with ſome who commend themſelves—We dare not imitate the arrogance and oſtentation of your falſe apoſtles. ' We will not boaſt of things without our meaſure, but according to the meaſure of the rule which God hath diſtributed to us, a meaſure to reach even unto you. For we ſtretch not ourſelves beyond, nor boaſt of things without our meaſure, that is, of other men's labours: But we have hope, when your faith is increaſed, that we ſhall be enlarged by you according to our rule, to preach the goſpel in the regions beyond you; and not to boaſt, in another man's line, of things made ready to our hand. 2 Cor. x. 12---16. How different was Paul's conduct from that of theſe falſe apoſtles? They could ſhew

ſhew no commiſſion to preach to the Corinthians, nor indeed any where elſe: But he could manifeſt his apoſtolick commiſſion, and his particular warrant to preach in Corinth; for when he was ordained to preach to the Gentiles, a meaſure was aſſigned him which included Achaia. They moved by no line, by no rule, but leaped from one church to another: He went on orderly in preaching the goſpel and planting churches among the Gentiles, from Judea through all the interjacent provinces, until he came to Corinth; and he hoped ſtill to proceed farther according to his line. They only came and perverted thoſe churches, where the faith had been already preached, and ſo could only boaſt of things made ready to their hands; inſtead of founding churches, they only formed ſects out of churches already founded: He preached the goſpel where no other apoſtle had before been employed; and erected churches, not as ſeparate parties, but only as provinces of Chriſt's general kingdom, that there might be no ſchiſm in the body. He ſpeaks to the ſame purpoſe in his letter to the Romans. 'I will not dare to ſpeak of,' or aſſume to myſelf, 'any of thoſe things, which Chriſt hath not wrought by me.'—'Yea, ſo have I ſtrived to preach the goſpel, not where Chriſt is named, leſt I ſhould build on another man's foundation. Rom. xv. 18, 20.

Miniſters, you ſee, are to have their reſpective lines and meaſures, within which they muſt move. They are not to be 'clouds without water, driven about with wind' in every direction: but clouds fraught with heavenly treaſures, and advancing in a ſteady courſe over the thirſty ground. 'Their

doctrine

doctrine ſhould drop as the rain, and diſtil as the dew, as the ſmall rain, on the tender herb, and the ſhowers on the graſs.' They are not to be 'wandering ſtars,' but ſtars confined in their appointed orbits. They are not to croſs each other's lines, and interfere in their motions; but, like the heavenly ſyſtem, to run, each in his proper circuit, around the common centre. They are to contribute, each in his ſphere, to the general order and harmony. They are to be fellow-workers to the kingdom of God. Paul charges the elders of the church, that they take heed to the flock, over which the Holy Ghoſt has made them overſeers, to feed the church of God.' Acts xx. 18. The caution given by Peter, 'Be ye not buſy-bodies in other men's matters,' is peculiarly applicable to, and perhaps eſpecially intended for miniſters, whom he particularly addreſſes in the precedent and ſubſequent verſes. The original phraſe literally imports, *Let none of you—act as a biſhop in another's province.* 1 Peter, iv. 15. It is a plain mark of a falſe teacher, to enter upon, and pull down other men's works, that he may build on their ground: To ſtretch himſelf beyond his meaſure, or to move without any line of direction. In this reſpect Peter and Jude compare the corrupt teachers, in that day, to clouds hurled about with a tempeſt—to raging waves of the ſea—to floating meteors, of ſtrong, but tranſient glare, to which is reſerved the blackneſs of darkneſs forever.* VII.

* The prophet Iſaiah, chap. xxx, verſe 20, ſays, "*Thine eyes ſhall* ſee *thy teachers.* This is a bleſſing peculiarly promiſed to the church of *Iſrael*, after ſhe had ſurmounted her greateſt trials; and therefore moſt properly belongs to the ſpiritual Iſrael, or goſpel-church; whoſe teachers ſhould not dwell, like the Levites, in ſeparate

VII. They are conſidered by the apoſtles as falſe teachers, who cauſe diviſions and offences in the churches of Chriſt.

The goſpel every where inculcates peace and unity among Chriſtians; and repreſents ſeparations and

arate cities, but in the midſt of her, ſo that ſhe might *ſee* them, be converſant with them, know their ability and fidelity in their office, have their example before her eyes, and enjoy their preſence and counſels in all her troubles. Such is evidently the deſign of the goſpel-miniſtry. Accordingly, except a few evangeliſts, who were extraordinary officers, and who had a work in ſome reſpects, peculiar to themſelves, the Chriſtian churches, in the firſt ages, had their *known* officers, their *ſettled* biſhops, who reſided, each in the church of which he was made overſeer. Such a man was elder or biſhop, of this church, and ſuch a man of another. Every congregation had its own paſtor; every large city had its body of paſtors. Chriſtians enjoyed a perſonal acquaintance with their miniſter; fully knew his faith, doctrine, manner of life, and had acceſs to him for advice on all occaſions; and he, ſtanding in a ſpecial and endearing relation to them, naturally cared for their ſtate. The evidence of this appears in all parts of the acts and the epiſtles. The church of Epheſus had her own overſeers, ſet apart, by the Holy Ghoſt, for her particular ſervice, to which they were commanded to take heed. The apoſtles ordained elders in *every* church. Titus was left in Crete, that he might ordain elders in *every* city, and ſet in order things which were wanting. The churches in Aſia had each her diſtinct *angel*, or *paſtor*, to whom John delivers a meſſage from Chriſt, to be communicated to the churches. Theſe obſervations prove, that a man who chooſes to officiate as a preacher, where he is unknown; who wanders from town to town, and from ſtate to ſtate, keeping his external call and qualifications out of ſight, carries a moſt glaring mark of a falſe teacher. And whatever pretenſions he makes of zeal for Chriſt, and love to ſouls, he is to be regarded with the ſame diſtruſt, as a rambling mountebank, who profeſſes a ſupernatural ſkill to heal men's diſeaſes, or predict their fortunes. Sectaries, who are fixed in no one place; who exhibit no authentick credentials; who preach not on the inſtituted day, in the ſtated place, under the patronage of ſettled miniſters; but in contempt of all order, creep into corners, call private lectures, endeavour to faſcinate their hearers with the charms of novelty, and, before they can well be known, flee away, and give place to a ſucceſſor of the ſame deſcription, come not from the good Shepherd; but are thoſe thieves and robbers, who come to ſteal and deſtroy, and of whom the great Shepherd has warned us to beware. To ſuch the porter may not open; and ſuch the ſheep may not hear nor follow."

Letter to the Author from a *Friend*.

and party attachments, as an evidence that they are carnal. Errours and corruptions in a church are no reaſon, why we ſhould withdraw from her communion, until they plainly appear to be fundamental and incurable; they are rather a reaſon, why we ſhould be watchful to reform the things that are amiſs, and to ſtrengthen the things that remain. There can ſcarcely be a more ſtriking indication of hypocriſy and carnality in a profeſſor of religion, than his ſeparating from the communion of a church, on pretence of corruptions or ungodly members in it, when he himſelf has never made one ſingle attempt to purge out the corruptions, or to reclaim or remove the ungodly members.

One great end of the inſtitution of churches, and of ſocial worſhip in them, is the promotion of peace, harmony and love. Thoſe teachers, therefore, whoſe object is to cauſe diviſions in churches, have nothing of the ſpirit of the goſpel, but are manifeſtly purſuing a deſign in direct oppoſition to it. Jude, deſcribing the impoſtors who had ſecretly crept in among Chriſtians, ſays, 'Theſe are they who ſeparate themſelves, ſenſual, having not the ſpirit. Verſe 19. No words can be more plain and deſcriptive, than thoſe of St. Paul. 'Mark them who cauſe diviſions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have received, and avoid them. For they that are ſuch ſerve not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but their own belly; and with good words and fair ſpeeches deceive the hearts of the ſimple.' Rom. xvi. 17, 18. They deceive by *fair ſpeeches*. They profeſs uncommon ſanctity, high aſſurance, extraordinary zeal, and immediate communication from the Spirit. As the apoſtle ſays, 'they commend and exalt

exalt themſelves, and meaſure themſelves by themſelves, and compare themſelves among themſelves, as if they were perfect and infallible ſtandards.—They juſtify their ſeparations by pretenſions, that others are not ſpiritual enough for their communion—they would form a pure church. The language of their conduct is, 'Stand by yourſelves, come not near, for we are holier than you.' But what ſays the God of peace and purity? 'Theſe are a ſmoke in my noſe; a fire that burneth all the day.' Iſaiah lxv. 5.

The promoters of diviſions, the better to accompliſh their wicked purpoſes, are watchful to take advantage of any unhappy circumſtance in a church; ſuch as an accidental contention, the diſcipline of an offending member, the ſickneſs or removal, the death or the temporary abſence of the ſtated paſtor: As the wolf leaps into the fold, when the ſhepherd is withdrawn, or a gap is opened. Paul, who knew their craft better than he wiſhed, ſays to the elders at Epheſus, 'I know that *after my departure*, ſhall grievous wolves enter in among you, not ſparing the flock. Alſo of your own ſelves ſhall men ariſe, ſpeaking perverſe things to *draw away diſciples after them*.' Acts 20, 29, 30. They are induſtrious to make diſciples: But to whom?—To Chriſt? No, but to themſelves. It is with this view that they ramble from fold to fold, and enter into other men's flocks. So Chriſt ſays to the ſcribes, 'Ye compaſs ſea and land to make one proſelyte;' leaving no art untried for that end. But what is their intention? Is it that their proſelyte may be more devoted to God? No: It is that he may be attached to them, and ſo

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add to their importance. 'When he is made, ſays Chriſt, ye make him more the child of hell than yourſelves.' Your corrupt flatteries only harden him in his wickedneſs. Matth. xxiii. 15. So Jude ſays of them, 'They have men's perſons in admiration becauſe of advantage;' eſteeming and applauding this and that man, not on account of his real virtue and worth, but only on account of his readineſs to ſerve *their* deſigns. 'No, no,' they will tell you, 'we have no ſuch unworthy aims: But the churches are fallen from the goſpel purity. And we are preſſed in ſpirit to teſtify againſt them; we would by all means ſave ſome.' Is this their intention? Why then climb they over the walls, inſtead of entering by the door? Why creep they in unawares, inſtead of walking upright? Why apply they not to the paſtors of churches, to convince them of, and reclaim them from the ſuppoſed errours and corruptions? Would not this be the ſureſt and directeſt way to reform corrupt and erroneous churches? This is the way that Chriſt has pointed out. When John was ſent to the degenerate churches of Aſia, did he neglect the ſtated paſtor, and addreſs the people without *his* knowledge? Did he attempt to diſaffect them to, and detach them from *his* miniſtry? Did he cauſe diviſions and ſeparations in order to make one pure church out of ſeven corrupt ones? No: John's letters are directed immediately to the *angel*, or *paſtor* of each church, to be by *him* communicated to the people. Thus the ſpirit ſpake to the churches. John acted by command of Chriſt. 'To the *angel* of the church write'—'Theſe things ſaith the *Son of God*'—'He that hath an ear let him hear, what *the ſpirit* ſaith to the churches? The churches

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were to hear what was ſpoken in this way: But they were not to hear every man who came in the garb of a teacher, and who, by his high pretenſions to inſpiration, ſubverted the order which Chriſt had ſettled. There were enough ſuch among them. Therefore one church is reproved, becauſe ſhe ſuffered them to teach, who falſely called themſelves prophets: And another is commended, becauſe ſhe could not bear them that were evil; and tried them, who ſaid, they were apoſtles, and were not; and found them liars.

It is a certain mark of a falſe teacher, if under pretence of reforming churches, he cauſes diviſions in them. There were corruptions in moſt of the Aſiatick churches: In ſome of them there were but few members, who had not defiled their garments. And what were theſe few to do?—Withdraw, leſt they ſhould be infected with the filthy garments of their brethren?—No: But to watch and keep their own garments, to ſave others with fear, and encourage the purity which remained. Rev. ii. and iii. chapters.

VIII. Falſe teachers uſually attend more to the form, than to the power of godlineſs.

The preaching of the apoſtles was rational, ſolid, and convincing. It tended to make men wiſe and good, humble and holy, pious and benevolent—They taught that, 'the kingdom of God was not meat and drink, but righteouſneſs and peace and joy in the Holy Ghoſt'—that 'in Chriſt neither circumciſion, nor uncircumciſion availed; but a new creature, keeping the commandments of God, and faith working by love.' Their doctrine was according to godlineſs. Impoſtors rather lay weight

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on certain diſtinguiſhing tenets and uſages of their own; on particular modes and forms; on the means and inſtruments of religion; on things ſuited to ſtrike the paſſions and captivate the affections. With men of this character, converſion, though perhaps much talked of, is only coming over to their ſect, and adopting their peculiar ſentiments and forms. When they gain proſelytes to their party, they boaſt the number of their converts; and urge their ſucceſs, as an evidence that God is with them. The blind, hypocritical guides, ſo often reproved by our Saviour, made religion to conſiſt more in tything mint, aniſe and cummin, in long and noiſy prayers, and frequent faſts, than in righteouſneſs, mercy, faith and the love of God. Matth. xxiii. Thoſe vagrants, who went out from the apoſtles, becauſe they were not of them, and who ſubverted the ſouls of the believers, taught, that except men were circumciſed, and obſerved the ceremonies of the law, they could not be ſaved. Acts xv. The falſe apoſtles in Corinth, and evil workers in Philippi, had confidence in the fleſh, in external rites and forms; they gloried that they were Hebrews, Iſraelites, and the ſeed of Abraham. 2 Cor. xi. Phil. iii. 2, 3, 4. The perverters of the goſpel in Galatia turned their hearers to weak and beggarly elements, and taught them to obſerve days and months, times, and years. Gal. iv. 9, 10. The unruly and vain talkers and deceivers in Epheſus and in Crete, who crept into houſes, and ſubverted whole families, had only a form of godlineſs; they denied the power of it. They ſought to pleaſe ſuch as could not endure ſound doctrine, and to gratify their itching ears.

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They humoured the diſpoſition of thoſe, who, after their own luſts, heaped to themſelves teachers; they amuſed them with fables, inſtead of edifying them with ſound doctrine. 2 Tim. iii. and iv. chapters. Titus i. 10, 11.

The apoſtles of Chriſt uſed great plainneſs of ſpeech; by manifeſtation of the truth commended themſelves to every man's conſcience; warned and taught every man in all wiſdom, that they might preſent every man perfect in Chriſt Jeſus. The falſe apoſtles aimed only to move the paſſions, pleaſe the fancy and excite the admiration of their hearers. 'They allured them with *great, ſwelling words of vanity*;' with words tending both to exalt themſelves, and ſwell the pride and ſelf-confidence of their deluded admirers. They might boaſt of their numerous converts; but converts made only by the agitation of the paſſions, without inſtruction of mind or change of temper, are but as trees whoſe fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots.'

The ancient Jews, in their corrupteſt ſtate, called frequent aſſemblies, appointed ſolemn meetings, and multiplied their offerings; they ſought God daily, aſked of him the ordinances of juſtice and took delight in approaching to him, as a nation that did righteouſneſs and forſook not the ordinances of their God. But God's inſtituted ſabbath and worſhip was no delight to them. They would worſhip God in any time or manner, except that which he had preſcribed. The prophet is therefore directed to cry aloud againſt them, and teach them their tranſgreſſion. Iſaiah lviii.

However zealous we are to heap to ourſelves teachers

teachers, and multiply to ourſelves ſeaſons of worſhip, if we neglect the worſhip of God on the day and in the place, which he has appointed, our religion is but an empty form. Such a perverſion of God's ordinances proceeds not from ſpiritual zeal, but from worldly luſt.

IX. This ſort of teachers are deſcribed as oppoſing ſubordination under inſidious pretenſions of liberty.

The apoſtle cautions the Epheſians, that 'they be not carried away—by the ſlight of men and cunning craftineſs, by which they lie in wait to deceive.' Chap. iv. 14. He alludes to the fraudful dexterity of practiſed gameſters in managing a die, or cube, as the word ſignifies, which they will throw with ſuch a ſlight as to make the ſide come up which they wiſh. Much ſo crafty deceivers toſs men about by addreſſing their feelings, and plying them with ſubjects ſuited to agitate their paſſions. And, for this ſpiritual legerdemain, they ſeldom find a more handy inſtrument, than the form of liberty. Their firſt object is to unſettle people's minds from the doctrine and order of the goſpel, by inſinuating, that their underſtandings have been impoſed on, and their conſciences enſlaved, and it is time to aſſert their liberty. If they can only ſet men afloat, they hope to take the direction of them into their own hands. This game the devil too ſucceſsfully played with our progenitors in Eden. He inſinuated, that they were held in ignorance and blind obedience; and if they would throw off the reſtraint, their eyes would be opened. The miniſters of Satan uſe the ſame artifice. Corah would perſuade the Jews, that they were led about blindfold by Moſes, and prieſt-ridden

den by the ſtanding order. Peter and Jude deſcribe ſeducers, as 'deſpiſing government,' and endeavouring, under pretence of liberty, to level all diſtinctions: As 'murmurers and complainers; preſumptuous and ſelf-willed; and as ſporting in their deceptions:' As headſtrong in their ways, and incapable of being mended by counſel, or reclaimed by reaſon.*

Paul gives the ſame account of them in his ſecond letter to Timothy. He ſays, 'Perilous times ſhall come, for men ſhall be lovers of their own-ſelves, covetous,' teaching things which they ought not for filthy lucre's ſake; 'proud, and boaſters' of their own ſuperior ſanctity; 'evil ſpeakers and diſobedient to parents' under pretence of being more godly than they; 'unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, covenant breakers,' or diſregarding the covenant obligations which they are under

* Peter mentions this among other marks of falſe teachers, that in their feſtivals or aſſemblies, *they ſported themſelves with their own deceivings*: Or with certain devices to deceive their followers; thus *beguiling unſtable ſouls*. Ireneus, a Chriſtian father, who wrote ſoon after the apoſtles, has mentioned a particular device, which Peter is here ſuppoſed to allude to. Speaking of theſe hereticks, he ſays, 'They made it their cuſtom, in their feſtivals, *ſortibus ludere*, to play with lots.' How theſe lots were applied, Peter may be ſuppoſed to intimate, when he ſays, their *ſporting* was to *deceive* and *beguile*, that they might better *exerciſe their covetous practices*. It is probable that theſe deceivers, pretending, that a lot drawn in a particular manner was a divine deciſion, took upon them thus to direct men's conduct, and to predict their deſtiny. Hence it appears that the impious practice, lately known among us, of diſcovering men's ſpiritual ſtate by a *lottery*, is not ſo novel, as ſome have imagined. Something ſimilar to it ſeems to have been in uſe among thoſe religious gameſters who vexed the church in, and ſoon after the apoſtles' times. But the uſe of paſſages of ſacred writ in a way of lottery, is a ſpecies of impiety probably unknown to the ancients. This improvement on the old plan modern gameſters may doubtleſs appropriate.

der to the church of God ; 'falſe accuſers, incontinent,' or much given to luſt ; 'fierce' and malignant in their tempers ; 'heady and high-minded :' And yet aſſuming 'a form of godlineſs !' 'Of this ſort are they who creep into houſes, to lead the ſimple captive. From ſuch turn away.' What is the liberty, which ſuch goodly patrons procure ? The apoſtle calls it *captivity*, or *ſubjection* to *divers luſts*. It is a liberty, which begins in licentiouſneſs and ends in bondage. Peter ſays, 'They allure through the luſts of the fleſh thoſe who had eſcaped from them that live in errour. While they promiſe them liberty, they themſelves are the ſervants of corruption ; for of whom a man is overcome, of the ſame he is brought into bondage.' 2 epiſtle, ii. 18, 19. They relax the ſtrict precepts of the goſpel, preach doctrines ſuited to men's corrupt inclinations ; flatter their ſpiritual pride, and bolſter them up with falſe hopes by haſtily pronouncing them in a ſtate of grace. Thus delivering them from the reſtraints of fear, they plunge them into more abſolute bondage to their luſts, and make their laſt ſtate worſe than the firſt.

I would obſerve once more.

X. Falſe teachers corrupt the word of God and handle it deceitfully. In oppoſition to them Paul ſays, 'We are not as *many*, who corrupt the word of God. We have renounced the hidden things of diſhoneſty—not handling the word of God deceitfully—' 2 Cor. ii. 17—and iv. 2. One common way in which they corrupt the word is, by 'turning the truth into fables,' or by rejecting the plain, literal meaning of ſcripture for the ſake of a myſtical, allegorical ſenſe, which they abſurdly call the

the 'ſpiritual ſenſe.' Thus they make the whole Bible uncertain, and are at liberty to give every text a fanciful turn, which beſt ſerves their own purpoſe, or pleaſes the humour of their hearers.

There were, in the apoſtles' days, ſome of this fantaſtick complexion. They denied the literal incarnation, death and reſurrection of Chriſt; and affirmed that his body was only ſpectral, and his death and reſurrection only illuſive. They profeſſed high perfection in holineſs, abſolute freedom from ſin, clear diſcernment of ſpiritual things, uncommon illuminations from God. It is manifeſt, that the epiſtle of Jude, and the firſt epiſtle of John, were written in oppoſition to theſe enthuſiaſtick, myſtical religioniſts. Jude calls them 'dreamers;' men whoſe religious notions were as wild and incoherent, as the ſports of imagination in a dream.

Some deiſtical writers have taken this method to ſubvert the credit of revelation: and the ſame artifice others have uſed to propagate their irrational and unſcriptural opinions.

Nothing can be more dangerous than this way of interpreting ſcripture. If we deny its literal meaning, and conceive the real ſenſe to be hidden in myſteries, allegories and fanciful alluſions, we entirely deſtroy its uſe: And then, in our inquiries after truth and duty, what rule ſhall we find to guide us? Every man's fancy muſt be his guide, which, like an *ignis fatuus*, will miſlead the wandering pilgrim into bogs and moraſſes of errour, and finally ingulph him in everlaſting ruin.

I have now laid before you ſome of the diſtinguiſhing characters of falſe teachers; and you will conſider and remember, that they are charac-

ters

ers drawn, not by me, but by the ſacred ſcriptures. Where they apply, let them apply. If you perceive that you have hitherto been under falſe teachers, it is time to renounce them and ſeek others: If you find otherwiſe, act accordingly. Teachers you are to have; but let them be goſpel ones. You muſt judge for yourſelves; but if you judge wrong, it is at your peril. 'Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leads to life, and few there be that find it: Therefore beware of falſe prophets.' Some ſeem to think it pretty indifferent whom they follow. If it be ſo, tell me why our divine Lord, and all his apoſtles, have taken ſo much care to guard you againſt impoſtors and intruders; and why they have given you ſuch perpetual cautions againſt them?

If you ſuſpect, that the doctrines of religion believed by your fathers, and the order of the churches, and the manner of introducing and ſupporting publick teachers, which have generally obtained in the land, are unſcriptural and deſtructive; if you imagine, that the churches in the country have been no better than ſynagogues of Satan; that God has never owned them as his churches, nor bleſſed the word and ordinances adminiſtered in them; if you ſuppoſe, that your fathers have been only fools and hypocrites, and that you, grown better and wiſer, are bound as Chriſtians, to encourage innovations tending to the ſubverſion of theſe churches; if theſe are your honeſt ſentiments, this only would I learn of you; when did piety and virtue, peace and good order moſt abound?—In the days of our fathers?—Or ſince theſe ſuppoſed improvements have taken place?

There

There are ſome things in religion, which all muſt allow to be great and eſſential; ſuch as juſtice, mercy, faith, benevolence, peaceableneſs, condeſcenſion and humility. The promotion of theſe is one great end of ſocial worſhip, and of all ſpecial inſtitutions. If we find, that any particular opinions and uſages do in fact anſwer this important end, there is a ſtrong preſumption in favour of them. But if, on the contrary, as new ſentiments and forms take place, they who adopt them become more ſwoln with pride and ſelf-confidence; more apt to vilify, cenſure and condemn their fellow Chriſtians, and more induſtrious to ſow diſcord among brethren; this is a ſhrewd ſign, that their notions are not founded in truth: At leaſt it proves, that their religion has done *them* no good.

When a miniſter warns his people againſt innovations in doctrine and worſhip, againſt heaping to themſelves teachers, and countenancing diviſions in churches, it is common that they impute to him ſome ſelfiſh deſign. Whatever opinion you may have of your own miniſter's views in preaching the goſpel, yet if you only conſider him as a man not diveſted of the common feelings of humanity, you will know it is impoſſible, that he ſhould be indifferent to your intereſt. Can you imagine, that one, who has miniſtered to you, and been converſant with you, in all circumſtances of proſperity and adverſity, from his youth for near thirty years; who has ſeen a great part of you grow up under his miniſtry; who has been ſupported by your liberality, and happy in your ſteady friendſhip; can you imagine, that ſuch an one will not *naturally* care for you? Can a ſtranger, on a tranſient interview,

have feelings like him? Believe the things now offered to be warnings of love.—I know them to be words of truth.

It is a day, when the churches in the land are in danger; and you are not exempt. Vice and immorality prevail; deſtructive errours make progreſs; the minds of many are unſettled from the truth, and from the order of the goſpel; important doctrines are denied or called in queſtion; ſacred inſtitutions are treated with contempt; and notions ſubverſive of peace and virtue are zealouſly propagated and eagerly embraced. But be not you carried about with divers and ſtrange doctrines. It is a good thing, that the heart be eſtabliſhed with grace.

The remarkable prevalence of errour and diſorder in churches, at this particular time, proceeds chiefly, I imagine, from two cauſes. Firſt, from the great careleſſneſs and ſtupidity of former years, in conſequence of which, many have grown up unprincipled in religion, and unfurniſhed with doctrinal knowledge, and ſo are peculiarly expoſed to the impoſitions of deſigning men, and utterly unprovided for their own defence. And, ſecondly, from the natural operations of the late civil war. Though it ultimately became a *national*, yet, in its origin and earlieſt ſtages, it was properly a *civil* war. And ſuch a war ſeldom fails to produce confuſion in religion. The reaſon is obvious: In a civil war the ſame people, divided into oppoſite intereſts, are filled with more violent animoſities, than thoſe which take place between contending nations. The mutual jealouſies and reſentments, zeal and engagedneſs of party againſt party, augmented

mented by mutual recriminations, proximity of ſituation, and the remembrance of paſt connexions, put the mind on the ſtretch, diſturb the nervous ſyſtem, and throw the ſpirits into an agitation nearly bordering on enthuſiaſm. To aggravate the animoſity, religion is uſually introduced on both ſides, and, contrary to her mild diſpoſition, is compelled to bear a part in the keen and angry controverſy. In ſuch a ſtate of mind, people are peculiarly ſuſceptible of deluſive impreſſions; conſequently new teachers, who riſe up, and labour to infuſe into Chriſtians jealouſies of each other, or of their ſtated inſtructors, are liſtened to with avidity, and received with credulity. At ſuch a time men become a much eaſier prey to errour and ſeduction, than in thoſe calmer periods, when their ſpirits are more ſerene and diſpaſſionate. And Satan doubtleſs takes advantage of the turbid ſcene, more darkly to ply his temptations, and more ſucceſsfully to ſpread the confuſion.

You have need, my brethren, to be peculiarly on your guard. Beware, leſt, being led away with the errour of the wicked, you fall from your own ſteadfaſtneſs. Remember the ſacred obligations you are under as profeſſors of religion. Let your faith in the truth of the goſpel be confirmed by thoſe appearances in the ſtate of the church, which the apoſtles have *ſo expreſsly foretold and ſo plainly deſcribed*. Attend on God's appointed ordinances, adhere cloſely to his word, and ceaſe to hear the inſtructions, which cauſe to err from the words of knowledge. Let your minds be calm in all your religious inquiries. Let not paſſion, jealouſy or party

party deſign have any influence in forming your principles, or determining your practice.

Conſider that religion is a matter of infinite importance; a buſineſs whoſe conſequences are not terminated with time, but reach forward into all the depths of eternity. Treat it always as a moſt ſerious concern; prove all things; hold faſt that which is good.

'But why all this ado about falſe teachers,' ſome will aſk, 'and why are miniſters ſo averſe to aſſiſtance in bringing ſouls to Chriſt? The huſbandman, if the harveſt is great, rejoices to ſee labourers come into his field.'

My brethren, the field is not ours; it is our Maſter's. Ye are God's huſbandry; we are his ſtewards, and muſt obey his orders. We rejoice in the help of thoſe, whom he approves and ſends.—But if we ſilently admit intruders, who purloin the crop; mar the corners of the field; trample the grain, or bind the ſheaves ſo ſlightly, that they cannot be gathered into his barn; what ſhall we do when he riſeth up? and when he viſiteth, what ſhall we anſwer him?

'But ought we not to attend on preaching, where we are beſt edified!'

You are to ſtudy the things, which make for peace, and by which you may edify one another. You are to make increaſe to the edifying of yourſelves in love. You are not to be ſelfiſh in your religion, any more than in your worldly buſineſs. You are to conſider one another to provoke to love and good works. If under pretence of perſonal edification, you purſue the meaſures which tend to hinder the edification of your brethren, you act

contrary

contrary to the character of Chriſtians, as much as he acts contrary to the character of a good citizen, who manages his worldly buſineſs to the prejudice of his neighbour's intereſt. Miſtake not the emotions of paſſion, the flights of imagination or the occaſional flow of affection for godly edifying. You are then edified, when you increaſe in knowledge, faith, purity, peaceableneſs, and good works. If you break the bond of peace, and the unity of the ſpirit, where is your edifying? 'The church is to come together into one place'—'to be builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.' The members of it are to be joined to the head by faith, and to each other by love. If they are divided and ſcattered, they have not the Spirit of God, nor the temper of Chriſtians, and there is no edifying.

'But what if we have a miniſter, whoſe preaching is not agreeable to us; muſt we hear *him* only?'

If his preaching is not agreeable to the goſpel, you ought by no means to be content with it. But what will you do? Will you ſilently withdraw, and leave your leſs diſcerning brethren to periſh under his corrupt miniſtry? Rather take goſpel-meaſures to convince him; or, if he is irreclaimable, to remove him. You are not to ſcatter away promiſcuouſly from a bad miniſter; but he is to be put away by a regular, publick cenſure of the churches, that a good one may ſucceed. Thus union is to be preſerved, and future impoſitions prevented.

'But a miniſter may preach the goſpel, and yet his *manner* not be entertaining. May we not pleaſe ourſelves?'

You are ſenſible, that hearers have a diverſity of taſtes,

taſtes, as well as miniſters a diverſity of gifts; and among Chriſtians of the ſame ſociety there muſt be ſome condeſcenſion. 'Ye that are ſtrong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not merely to pleaſe yourſelves. Let every one of you pleaſe his neighbour for his good to edification—' Paul, Apollos and Cephas preached the ſame goſpel; but in a different manner. Some were pleaſed with Paul's reaſoning; ſome admired Apollos's eloquence; and ſome were charmed with Peter's warmth of addreſs. So much might be expected. But when they ran into parties, and ſome attached themſelves to this, and ſome to that preacher in oppoſition to each other, what ſaid Paul to them? 'Ye are carnal and walk as men.'

Itching *ears* indicate an ill humour in the blood; and they who with ſuch ears, *heap to themſelves teachers*, are ſaid to do it, not after the ſpirit of God, but *after their own luſts*: Not becauſe they love religion, but becauſe *they cannot endure ſound doctrine*. From ſuch teachers as creep into houſes, or churches, to lead the ſimple captive, you are to turn away. Thoſe who cauſe diviſions you are to mark and avoid. You are not to bid them, God ſpeed.

'But ſurely there is ſuch a thing as a juſtifiable ſeparation; elſe why ſays Paul to the Corinthians, *Come ye out from among them, and be ye ſeparate?*' 2 Cor. vi. 17.

Doubtleſs there is a juſtifiable ſeparation; juſt ſuch an one as Paul recommends. And what is this?—Not a ſeparation from the *church*; for this direction is given to the *church*; and Paul could not mean, that the church ought to ſeparate

arate from *herſelf*: But it is a ſeparation from the vices of the world, and from the idolatries of the heathens. So the apoſtle explains it: 'What fellowſhip hath righteouſneſs with unrighteouſneſs? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?' And how were theſe Chriſtians to ſeparate? The apoſtle tells them: 'Therefore let us cleanſe *ourſelves* from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit.—'

'Is there no caſe then, in which Chriſtians may ſeparate from a church?'

There may be ſuch a caſe. If a church is ſo eſſentially and irreclaimably corrupt, as to ceaſe to be a church of Chriſt, then, after we have in vain tried the goſpel-meaſures already mentioned, for her reformation, we ought to withdraw from her communion. On this principle the proteſtants ſeparated from the church of Rome. She had introduced idolatry in its external form, adopted another rule of faith beſides the ſcriptures, ſet up another head and acknowledged other mediators beſides Jeſus Chriſt, and ſhe perſecuted even to priſon and death, thoſe who teſtified againſt her errours and laboured for her reformation. The apoſtle John, Rev. xviii. 4. ſpeaking prophetically of the corrupt ſtate of this church, ſays, 'I heard a voice from heaven, ſaying, *Come out from her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her ſins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.*' Or if a church requires ſuch terms of communion, as we think unlawful, we can have no fellowſhip with her in divine ordinances, though we may have a charitable opinion of her, as a true church. There is a material difference between a church's holding certain errours, and her making an adoption of thoſe errours a term of communion to others.

others. But in this caſe ſhe rather excludes us, than we ſeparate from her. Our fathers were, in this manner, driven from the church of England. They owned her as a church of Chriſt, and would have continued in her communion, notwithſtanding certain uſages, which they thought unſcriptural, if ſhe would have diſpenſed with their conformity to her therein; but as ſhe made an entire conformity an indiſpenſible term of communion, they thought themſelves bound to withdraw. It was not a ſeparation on *their* part, but an excluſion on *her* part. Or if a number of profeſſed Chriſtians ſhould ſeparate from a church with which they are in ſolemn covenant, and form themſelves into a ſociety in oppoſition to their brethren, and thus cauſe diviſions and offences, however candidly we may think of them, as honeſt, but deluded Chriſtians, we cannot have communion with them as a church, not only becauſe they renounce us, but alſo becauſe they combine to ſubvert ſuch as we ſuppoſe to be churches of Chriſt. We are to mark and avoid them. But ſmaller errours in doctrine or diſcipline, when they are not made terms of communion, can never juſtify ſuch a ſeparation as implies a renouncing of communion. Chriſt owns and treats the churches in Aſia, as his churches, though moſt of them had greatly degenerated: And far from encouraging the purer chriſtians to withdraw from the reſt, he commands them to be watchful and ſtrengthen the things that remain. And let no man dare to judge and deſpiſe thoſe, whom God has received. Rom. xiv. 1, 2.

An honeſt zeal for the purity of churches, is to God an odour of a ſweet ſmell; but complaints of

of corruption, when they proceed from ſpleen and hypocriſy, are a ſmoke in his noſtrils. Many, who are loud in complaining of diſorders in churches, inſtead of attempting to reform them, only urge them as pretenſions for ſeparating from their brethren, with whom they are in ſolemn covenant. Inſtead of adopting the animating language of the Levites to Ezra, *Ariſe, for this matter belongeth to thee; we alſo will be with thee;* they only ſtand and diſcharge ſome blind and random reproaches; then face about, and withdraw. Thus they diſcourage the hearts of their brethren, ſtrengthen the hands of evil doers, and provide a retreat for the guilty, who would evade the juſt diſcipline of the church. How frequent is the caſe, that when an offending brother is admoniſhed for his ſins, he defeats the inſtituted means of his repentance, and ſeeks refuge from merited cenſure, by flying to ſome other ſect, who make him welcome with all his ſins, having his perſon in admiration, becauſe of advantage.

To conclude, Be ye all like-minded one toward another according to Chriſt Jeſus, that ye may, with one mind and one mouth, glorify God. Be not deceived by falſe appearances. The kingdom of God cometh not with outward ſhow and oſtentation; neither is there occaſion to ſay, Lo, here; or, lo, there; for it is a kingdom within men. True religion is peaceable, modeſt and humble: Hypocriſy is turbulent, noiſy and vain. Falſe doctrines, like dry winds, are bluſtering and unſteady, violent in their motions, and noxious in their effects. The doctrines of truth are like the gentle dews on the tender herb, and the ſhowers on the graſs. Be ye not carried about with every wind of doc-

trine. The ſincere Chriſtian, rooted and grown up in Chriſt, and eſtabliſhed in the faith, with knowledge and judgment, like the deep-rooted oak, ſtands firm and unmoved, whatever winds may blow; while falſe converts and unprincipled profeſſors, like withered leaves, are caught in the giddy whirl, wafted around and made the ſport of each wanton guſt. Conclude not that there is moſt true religion, where the flame of zeal ſeems to mount the higheſt. Chaff and ſtubble will ſpring into a ſudden blaze, which towers for a moment, and then expires: Solid fuel burns more moderately, but yields a more ſteady and genial heat. Paul, while a phariſee, was zealous to madneſs againſt the truth; when he became a Chriſtian, his zeal was as much changed as his object. You now ſee no more of his former madneſs: His Chriſtian zeal is a calm, rational, firm reſolution, bearing him along in the courſe of duty, with equable motion, through every oppoſition and danger. The ſpirit of true religion is not in the ſtorm, the earthquake or the fire, but in the ſtill, ſmall voice.

And now the God of all grace and wiſdom grant, that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and all judgment, that ye may approve the things that are excellent, that ye may be ſincere and without offence until the day of Chriſt, and may be filled with the fruits of righteouſneſs, which are by Jeſus Chriſt, to the praiſe and glory of GOD.

AMEN.

APPENDIX.

IN the preceding pages we have endeavoured to maintain this poſition, 'That no man has a right to officiate, or ought to be received, in the character of a publick teacher of religion, until he has been approved and recommended by *Elders* of *Churches*.'

The ſcriptural evidence in ſupport of our poſition, we hope cannot reaſonably be controverted. But an objection will perhaps meet us from ſuppoſed neceſſity, or hiſtorical fact.

'Many centuries,' it will be ſaid, 'have elapſed, ſince Chriſt commiſſioned his apoſtles, and ſince they ordained their ſucceſſors: And how can we know, that the ſucceſſion has been continued without interruption? And if there has been an interruption, then there was a time, when ordination was taken up anew by private Chriſtians. What then are all preſent ordinations, traced to their origin, but lay-ordinations?'

This objection may deſerve an anſwer.

The great queſtion here muſt be, What is the inſtitution of Chriſt, and the apoſtolick uſage? By *theſe* we muſt be governed, and theſe muſt not be ſet aſide by imaginary neceſſity, or ſuppoſititious facts.

The goſpel-hiſtory confirms the poſition which

we

we have laid down. A miniſtry in the church is undeniably inſtituted by Chriſt—introduction to the miniſtry, in the apoſtolick age, was by prayer and the impoſition of the hands of *elders*—this uſage was invariably, and without a ſingle deviation, continued, as long as the ſacred hiſtory affords any light—the directions concerning ordinations are given to *biſhops*, or *elders*, and to them *only*—no proviſion is made for caſes of neceſſity, or for the renewal of the miniſtry, if it ſhould happen to ceaſe—we have an expreſs promiſe from Chriſt, that he will ſupport his church, and be with his miniſters *always* even to the *end of the world*. When we compare this promiſe with the inſtitution of the miniſtry, and the mode of introduction, which immediately followed, we think it can import no leſs, than that a regular miniſtry, ſhould never ceaſe in the church, nor any neceſſity occur for departing from the inſtituted manner of introduction. We have the inſtitution, the promiſe and the apoſtolick practice in our favour; and what more do we need? The promiſe, ſo emphatically expreſſed, and ſo clearly interpreted by ſubſequent uſage, muſt, we think, be underſtood as we have ſtated it.

It is then by no means neceſſary, that, by hiſtorical deduction, we ſhould prove an uninterrupted ſucceſſion; we have a right to preſume it, until evidence appears to the contrary. If any ſay, the ſucceſſion has failed, the burthen of proof muſt lie wholly on them. Let them from inconteſtible hiſtory, ſhew us the time, place and manner in which it terminated—who were the laſt miniſters in the line from the apoſtles—who the firſt in the

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new line—who the laymen that ordained them—and where was the ſcene of the tranſaction.—Until we have this information, we rely on the promiſe of Chriſt, in the ſenſe in which we underſtand it.

But it will be aſked, 'What if a nnmber of Chriſtians ſhould be caſt on a deſolate coaſt or iſland, or ſhould emigrate to a country ſecluded from intercourſe with the Chriſtian world, and ſhould have among them no ordained miniſter? May they not ordain miniſters for themſelves? May not miniſters thus ordained venture to officiate?

But tell me firſt, Where is this ſolitary iſland or coaſt—this ſecluded country of Chriſtians?—Did you ever read of a colony of pious Chriſtians emigrating to a new country, who forgot to take miniſters with them; or whom no miniſters would accompany or follow? If no ſuch caſe has ever happened, or is ever likely to happen, it is not ſtrange, that the Head of the church has made no proviſion for it; nor is it neceſſary, that we ſhould undertake to remedy his omiſſion.

But probably ſome will ſtill imagine, that fact is againſt us. They will tell us, 'Ordinations came down to us through the church of Rome; and there was a time when that church was ſo eſſentially corrupt, that ſhe ceaſed to be a church of Chriſt, and her officers ceaſed to be miniſters of Chriſt; and therefore they, who withdrew from her, at the time of the reformation, having among them no valid ordinations, muſt have begun them anew.'

But will hiſtory ſupport this concluſion? Did the firſt reformers, diſtruſting their paſt ordinations, receive one from their lay-brethren?—The contra-

ry is moſt evident. The proteſtant reformers in England early drew up a confeſſion of their faith, in which, as Doctor Burnet ſays, 'they cenſure any who ſhould take upon them to preach, or adminiſter the ſacraments, without having lawfully received the power from the *miniſters*, to whom *alone* the right of conferring that power doth appertain.' Certainly they had no apprehenſion, that the miniſterial ſucceſſion was at an end.

The Roman church, though at that time exceedingly corrupt, appears not to have materially corrupted her ordinations. In this matter, we do not find, that the reformers alledged any complaint.

Though corruptions early began in the Chriſtian church, yet their progreſs was gradual and ſlow. In every age many diſſented from them, great oppoſition was made to them, and large councils of biſhops, or miniſters, publickly condemned them. The weſtern or Roman church ultimately carried her corruptions to a more extravagant height, than the oriental or Greek church; but even in the former, they never came to their criſis, until the famous council of *Trent*, which was opened more than twenty, and cloſed more than forty years, after the beginning of Luther's reformation. That council, called by the Pope's bull, and ſupported by the Emperour's arms, in oppoſition to the reformers, 'eſtabliſhed,' as Doctor Tillotſon ſays, 'ſeveral *New Articles* which had *never before* been acknowledged by any general council.' Thoſe new articles, if avowed by ſome, yet had not been generally received, in their full extent, as now declared. If they had been decreed by one council, it was but a partial one, and they were ſoon after condemned

demned by another; and therefore were not to be conſidered as the received and acknowledged doctrines of the church. At this time, as the Doctor obſerves, 'the errours of the church of Rome roſe to their height.' He demands of the papiſts, 'Where their religion was before the council of *Trent*.' He challenges them, 'to ſhew a religion, conſiſting of *all* the ſame articles which are defined by that council as neceſſary to ſalvation, profeſſed by any Chriſtian church in the world *before that time*.'

Luther and his aſſociates, in their firſt oppoſition to the errours of the Roman church, did not conſider her, as having *eſſentially* departed from the goſpel, or as being utterly diſowned by Chriſt; for their primary object was, not to withdraw from her, but to effect a reformation by means which might preſerve the general union. They never renounced her, until they and their adherents were excommunicated, and all hopes of union were cut off; but, on the contrary, demanded a *free* and *general* council, to deliberate on means of accompliſhing the reformation ſo much deſired. When Luther was conſtrained to diſclaim that church, Doctor Moſheim obſerves, 'he ſeparated himſelf from it, only as it acknowledged the Pope to be infallible; not from the church conſidered in a more extenſive ſenſe; for he ſubmitted to the deciſion of the *univerſal* church, when that deciſion ſhould be given in a *general* council *lawfully* aſſembled.' 'This,' ſays Doctor Maclaine, was a judicious diſtinction; for though the papacy was confounded with the catholick church, they were in reality different things. The papacy had indeed by degrees

grees incorporated itſelf into the church; but it was a prepoſterous ſupplement, and as foreign to its genuine conſtitution, as a new citadel erected by a ſucceſsful uſurper, would be to an ancient city. Luther acted on this diſtinction; he went out of the *citadel*; but he meant to remain in the *city*, and, like a good patriot, deſigned to reform its government.' But when the advocates for a general reformation deſpaired of their object, they came out from that irreclaimable church, that they might not partake of her ſins, nor receive of her plagues. And we derive our ordinations from thoſe who came out, not from thoſe who remained behind—from the purer part which embraced, not from the corrupter part which oppoſed, the reformation. It cannot then be true, that our ordinations came through the church of Rome, if by that appellation is intended the corrupt body which the proteſtants renounced. And ſurely none will alledge, that thoſe pious men, who had long oppoſed her corruptions, and contended for a reformation, were themſelves too erroneous to be owned as miniſters, or that their hands were too unclean to convey a pure ordination.

One cannot here but feel the ſtriking contraſt between thoſe ancient reformers, who laboured to correct the errours, without breaking the union of the church, and certain modern pretenders, who, in the firſt inſtance, ſeparate themſelves from the churches, and then exclaiming againſt them as corrupt, promote and encourage diviſions in them.

It is obſervable, that miniſters were the firſt to bear teſtimony againſt the prevailing corruptions—the firſt to ſtand forth in the cauſe of truth and purity;

rity ; and God owned them as his faithful ſervants, and ſucceeded them in their arduous undertaking.

In the greateſt part of Germany, and in many other places, the main body of the clergy ſoon declared in favour of the reformation, and united their efforts in its cauſe. In England, more than a hundred years before Luther, the ſeeds of it were ſown by the doctrines of Wickliff. And though their growth was retarded by the long inclemency of the ſeaſon, yet they were gradually taking root, and, under the firſt warm beams, they ſprang up and grew. The papal juriſdiction, which for ages had been denied, or received with great limitations, by the Kings of England, was totally renounced in 1533, by Henry VIII. and the biſhops; and the ſcriptures were declared to be the ſtandard of religion. In this reign, Cranmer, as well before as after his promotion to the ſee of Canterbury, favoured the doctrines of Luther, which by his influence obtained a conſiderable ſpread among the people and clergy. In 1547, when Edward VI. who had been educated in the principles of the reformation, came to the throne, the proteſtant religion, being patronized by the King and his court, and encouraged by many of the biſhops, as well as other clergy, generally prevailed. And, after a ſhort interruption in the bloody reign of Mary, it was fully eſtabliſhed under Elizabeth in 1558. So that proteſtancy was in fact the religion of England, a number of years before the concluſion of the council of Trent.

The rapid progreſs of the reformation, and the vaſt number of miniſters, who early embraced it, make it evident, that there could be no occaſion ;

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and the fervent zeal of the reformed againſt the errours of popery makes it as evident, that there could be no diſpoſition, to receive ordinations in future from the papal clergy. And therefore, without the labour of tracing a lineal ſucceſſion, we have clear hiſtorical evidence, that our ordinations deſcended not from the church of Rome, after ſhe became ſo corrupt, as in the opinion of proteſtants, to ceaſe from being a true church.

It will perhaps be aſked, 'How do we know, but the firſt reformers had been ordained by ſome of the vileſt men in the Roman church?' But let me aſk, How do we know, or is it probable, that this was the caſe? The reformers themſelves appear to have entertained no ſcruples on this head. Let it ſtill be remembered, that irregularity in ordinations was not made matter of complaint againſt her; that her corruptions had not ſo early riſen to their height; and that ſhe had not yet eſtabliſhed, by a general council, her groſſeſt errours, nor expunged her pureſt members.

But admitting that a man of corrupt principles and morals acts in an ordination; will his character nullify the tranſaction? As long as the ſcribes ſat in Moſes' ſeat, Chriſt acknowledged them as officers of the Jewiſh church; nor did he deny the authority of the high-prieſt, though his perſonal character was far from recommending him.

The perſon ordained derives his authority to preach from Jeſus Chriſt; not from the men who ordain him. They indigitate the perſon to be veſted with this authority, and officially inſtate him in the regular exerciſe of it; but it is Chriſt's goſpel, not their will, which muſt direct him in the execution

tion of his office. If *they* are corrupt in principles or manners, it will not thence follow, that *he* muſt preach hereſy or immorality. He is ordained to preach the goſpel; and whoever may ordain him, the charge which he receives, and the vow which he makes, bind him to teach, not the commandments of men, but all things whatſoever Chriſt has commanded.

To break the chain of ſucceſſion at the link in queſtion, it muſt be proved, that the perſons, from whom the firſt reformers received ordination, not only were in errours, but had actually ceaſed to be officers of Chriſt.

With reſpect to the ordinations in this land little needs to be ſaid. It is well known, that the firſt miniſters in the country were ordained in England by men whoſe authority is not controverted. Though ſome of our fathers ſuppoſed, that lay-ordinations might be juſtified, yet this ſentiment was diſapproved by their brethren in England; and was not ſo long retained here, as to be carried into practice. The inſtalment of perſons already ordained, was in ſome inſtances, performed by lay brethren; but during the firſt century after the ſettlement of New-England, ordinations were conſtantly ſolemnized by the hands of ordained elders, except in two or three inſtances; and even in theſe there was the preſence and concurrence of elders, though they impoſed not their hands. Preſident *Stiles* ſays,* that 'no more than one ſuch inſtance, in the laſt century, appears with certainty.' And if there were a few ſuch inſtances, in different times and places, they affect not the ſucceſſion; becauſe, ordinations

* Election Sermon.

ordinations among us being performed by a number of miniſters, not by a ſingle perſon, it may always be preſumed, that ſome of the number are men regularly authorized.

The Preſident, 'on a full, thorough and laborious inquiry,' affirms, that 'the ſucceſſion, in the line of preſbyters, was preſerved without interruption, at the time of the reformation, and the New-England ordinations, in this line, may with aſſurance be traced back even to the holy apoſtles.'

FINIS.

H.M.